

THE NORTHERN WORLD ●●● BRILL

# The Brendan Legend

*Texts and Versions*



*Edited by*  
Glyn S. Burgess and  
Clara Strijbosch



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## THE BRENDAN LEGEND

# THE NORTHERN WORLD

North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD  
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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## SEARCHING FOR A VERSATILE SAINT: INTRODUCTION

Clara Strijbosch

The Irish Saint Brendan received his fame not from his holiness or from the miracles he performed, but from his travels. Shortly after his death (c. 575), tales were told that he had sailed the Ocean. In the Middle Ages stories about Brendan's sea voyages spread all over western Europe, from the coast of the Baltic Sea to Spain and Portugal; as a result, the saint became known as Brendan the Navigator. Already in the seventh century, stories of his travels circulated in his home country of Ireland, but of this early complex of stories only the outlines are visible. The Brendan tradition is vast and its earliest form is hard to grasp because the extant texts are relatively late and located largely outside Ireland; the oldest extant manuscripts date from the tenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The medieval Brendan tradition falls into the following four text-types:

1. The *Vita Brendani*, preserved in five Latin and two Irish versions and in manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth century. The *Vita* is an amalgam of episodes commonly found in a saint's life, i.e. biographical data, miracles performed by the saint and sea voyages undertaken. Most versions of the *Vita* are conflated with the text which follows:
2. The *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, a tale of the travels of Brendan and his monks over the Ocean before reaching a paradise-like Promised Land of the Saints. This text combines elements of a saint's life, a marvellous sea voyage and an allegorical journey through life, and it is closely connected with monastic culture. It is a religious counterpart to the Irish travel-stories known as *imram* ('rowings around') and *echtrae* ('outings', 'adventures'). It is of the *Navigatio* that the earliest manuscripts survive, dating from the

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<sup>1</sup> A survey of manuscripts and studies on Brendan is to be found in Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, ed., *The Brendan Legend. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000.

tenth century and localised in the Lotharingian region. The *Navigatio* was clearly an extremely popular story, as there are 125 surviving manuscripts from the tenth to the seventeenth century, from all over western Europe. Moreover, the *Navigatio* has been translated and reworked in nearly all of the western European vernaculars, from Catalan to Norse. It was also the source of one of the first vernacular romances, the reworking (c. 1105 or shortly after 1121) by the Anglo-Norman monk Benedeit, who adopted an independent attitude towards the *Navigatio*.

3. *Sankt Brandans Reise/De reis van Sint Brandaan* [*Reise*] originated around 1150 in the Middle Frankish area (between Cologne and Trier). The original, anonymous version O has been lost. The *Reise* has been preserved in five versions, two in German verse (the Middle High German version M and the Lower German N), two in Middle Dutch verse (one in the Comburg Codex, C, the other in the Van Hulthem Manuscript, H), and one in German prose, P, extant in five manuscripts (b, g, h, l, m) and twenty-four incunabula and early prints from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These versions can be divided into three branches: C/H, M/N and P, deriving independently from the lost original O. The *Reise* is a unique version of the Brendan legend with a highly original framework. We are told here that Brendan throws a book into the fire because he did not believe the marvels it contained. He is then sent on a sea voyage to witness with his own eyes the marvels in which he refused to believe; he finally returns to Ireland with a rewritten book.
4. A group of shorter texts on Brendan, from Ireland as well as the Continent. These consist of prayers to Brendan, episodes recounting a story from his life or his stay on a paradise-type island. One of the more substantial of these texts, as well as being the first text in Irish wholly devoted to Brendan, is the short poem entitled *Mochen, mochen, a Brénaind*.

For all these text-types the mutual influences have long been, and still are being, discussed. The Brendan material is undoubtedly of Irish origin and a legend concerning the saint was probably already circulating in the seventh century. This version may have contained episodes found in the later *Vita Brendani*, including not just a single voyage but two voyages over the Ocean. Both the *Vita* and the *Navigatio* were based on this text, and it is probably the *Vita* which

is closer to the original legend. Already at an early stage in their development, the Brendan texts were amalgamated with material from the Irish *immrama* and *echtrae*. But merely to see the *Navigatio* as the 'religious' counterpart to the 'worldly' *immrama*, or the other way around, seems oversimplified. It is probable that parts of the *immrama* were incorporated into the Brendan material at various stages and that at all these stages oral transmission had an important part to play.<sup>2</sup> However, by the tenth century the *Navigatio* had found its shape in written form, as is seen from the first *Navigatio* manuscripts which date from this period.

Because of its widespread popularity, *Navigatio* material permeated all the other text-types. In five of the seven versions of the *Vita Brendani* a *Navigatio* text has been inserted, more or less smoothly. The *Navigatio* has been translated and reworked in many vernaculars, and it is the source of two vernacular reworkings in the twelfth century: Benedeit's version and the Middle-Franconian *Reise*. The monk Benedeit's text has been described as the first romance in the vernacular. Benedeit did not completely recast the *Navigatio*, but he nevertheless adopted an independent attitude towards his source and adapted the story to the expectations and desires of his courtly Anglo-Norman audience. For its part, the Middle-Franconian *Reise* should be considered to be a new version of the text. Though the influence of the *Navigatio* cannot be doubted, the unknown author of the lost twelfth-century *Reise* completely restructured his material, making use of many other ancient and contemporary Irish and continental stories in order to tell his tale of Brendan.

The fourth category mentioned above, the short material on Brendan, is too diverse and incoherent for us to come to any conclusions concerning its sources. It is clear from the role Brendan plays here that he was known as a sea-voyager and probably as the saint who landed on a paradise-like island. This is the form which inspired the tale that Brendan discovered America, long before Columbus set eyes on the 'new' continent.

One of the consequences of the wide distribution of Brendan material has been that the study of Brendan texts has spread over all of western Europe. For a long time historians of medieval European

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<sup>2</sup> On the search for the sources of the Brendan material, see Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, transl. Thea Summerfield, Dublin 2000, esp. pp. 125–65.

literature were unable to estimate properly the interrelationship between texts produced in different areas because the western-European philologies and literary histories were founded on national languages. For Brendan studies this has meant that for a long time those working on Celtic, German and Romance languages and literatures did not take much notice of the research of scholars in other areas and consequently worked along different lines.

In the year 2000 two volumes appeared which brought together various aspects of Brendan material: *The Seafaring Saint* by Clara Strijbosch and *The Legend of St Brendan* by Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, the latter being a critical bibliography listing all known primary and secondary works on Brendan. In 2002 a further volume was published by Ray Barron and Glyn Burgess: *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*.<sup>3</sup> These publications provide a foundation on which research on Brendan can be based, irrespective of national languages and literatures.

The present volume is the product of the first International Conference on Saint Brendan, which brought together specialists from various countries, languages and literatures in order to further our knowledge of the textual and literary transmission of medieval Brendan texts spanning the entire period and extent of textual transmission.<sup>4</sup> Because of the vast proliferation of Brendan material, it was impossible at one meeting to cover all extant versions and adaptations. For example, the extensive field of vernacular translations of the *Navigatio* and the entangled material of the Latin *Vita* were touched upon, but for lack of time were not fully developed. However, an attempt was made to assemble representative contributions to the field of Brendan studies as a whole, covering all main text-types of the legend, i.e. the *Vita Brendani*, the *Navigatio*, Benedeit's version, the *Reise* and the shorter Brendan texts. The various studies all shed light on problems of sources and transmission, thus giving us a better understanding of the material which lies at the base of the extant

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<sup>3</sup> W. J. R. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2002; revised paperback version 2005.

<sup>4</sup> The conference entitled *The Brendan Legend. Texts and Contexts* took place in Gargnano del Gardo, 7 to 9 October 2002 and was organised by Giovanni Orlandi and Clara Strijbosch. The organisers would like to thank Gennaro Barbarisi, Fabrizio Conca, Enrico Decleva, Rosanna Guglielmetti and Marisa Rodofile of Milan University for their invaluable assistance.

texts and of the reasons and consequences associated with the transfer of these texts to other periods and regions.

Some general background to the Brendan material is provided in the article by Hérold Pettiau, who in 'The Abbot and the Monastic Community in the Gaelic Churches, 550 to 800' shows that the *Navigatio* reflects the huge importance of the strong leadership of abbots in the Gaelic Church of the earlier Middle Ages. As was the norm in reality, Brendan's authority over his monks is absolute and he plays a key role in the provision of food for his community. Because this type of abbacy was standard in the sixth as well as in the eighth century, a closer dating of the *Navigatio* on the basis of information concerning Brendan's role is not possible. The same is true, more or less, for the place of origin. According to Martin McNamara's article on the liturgical and apocryphal influences on the *Navigatio*, the Psalter text and the form of Divine Office used in the *Navigatio* do not clarify the Irish or continental origins of this text; they do show, however, that there was no influence from the Rule of Saint Benedict. Only the use of the word 'theophania' for the feast of Epiphany would constitute an argument in favour of continental origin. The Irish connections of the Brendan material are stressed in the article by Séamus Mac Mathúna, which deals with the two Irish versions of the *Vita Brendani*. Exploring this vast field of study, which has attracted very little attention from researchers, he clarifies the division of the families of manuscripts into two versions, the First Irish Life and the Second Irish Life, the latter being conflated with the *Navigatio*, and he explains the strategies used by their authors. The First Irish life is a homily, intended for Brendan's feast day, May 16, and it must have been based on an original which omitted the later life of the saint. It has fairly obviously been conflated with Irish visionary material such as the *Dá apstol décc na hÉirenn* ('The Twelve Apostles of Ireland') and the *Fís Adomnán* ('The Vision of Adamnán'). The late-medieval Second Irish Life combines extracts from the First life with an Irish adaptation of the *Navigatio* and is the most complete and most conflated of all the extant versions of the Life of Brendan. Mac Mathúna's findings make it clear that the Irish authors of Brendan lives tried to combine his life with visionary and hagiographic material which they had to hand. He also shows that the *Navigatio*, even though the dearth of Irish manuscripts seems to indicate otherwise, had been well known and used in late-medieval Ireland.

As Thomas Owen Clancy clarifies in his article on the Middle Irish Poem *Mochen*, *mochen*, a *Brénaind*, this poem may have originally been addressed to an eleventh-century pilgrim who had travelled from Ireland to Europe and beyond, and was subsequently addressed to Saint Brendan. His findings prove not only that Brendan was recognised on the Continent as a traveller beyond the known world, but in Irish circles as well.

Whether the most famous of the medieval Brendan texts, the *Navigatio*, originated on the Continent or in Ireland has been subject of a long-standing debate. The earliest extant *Navigatio* manuscripts date from the tenth century and were written on the Continent. Linguistic arguments based on the earliest manuscripts have led Giovanni Orlandi and Michaela Zelzer to entirely different conclusions, which are represented in their respective articles in this volume. According to Orlandi, the *Navigatio* is an Irish production; features of non-Hibernian Latin in the *Navigatio* do not prove the text was written on the Continent, but they do show the influence of the circulation in the British Isles of hagiographies composed in Merovingian Latin. In her article 'Philological Remarks' Michaela Zelzer defends her point of view that the *Navigatio* was composed on the Continent early in the Carolingian period. Because in continental Carolingian politics everything Irish had become suspicious, all references to Ireland had been left out of the text. Both Orlandi and Zelzer have been working on a new edition of the *Navigatio*, based on new studies of the stemma; several articles in this volume mention these unpublished (or provisionally published) editions. One of the problems in the establishment of a critical text is that the tenth-century *Navigatio* manuscripts already show traces of substantial changes and none of them is clearly the source of the others. Already in the first *Navigatio* manuscripts two different forms of the story appear, the so-called 'long' and 'short' versions. The long version provided the basis for the edition by Carl Selmer in 1959. The short version does not contain the last chapter, which relates Brendan's return to Ireland and his death there, after his visit to the Promised Land of the Saints.<sup>5</sup> In his article based on a study of four Portuguese *Navigatio* manuscripts Aires Nascimento makes it clear that there must have

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<sup>5</sup> Carl Selmer, ed., *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Medieval Studies, 16), repr. Blackrock (Co. Dublin) 1989, pp. 97–98.

been a third version, which he calls the ‘Hispanic’ text-type. This version has similarities to the short *Navigatio* and is even shorter than the so-called short text: it does not contain the beginning of the central European *Navigatio* (called the ‘Vulgate’) and has three fewer chapters. The Hispanic version is in general more sober than the central European one, and ascribes more responsibility to the community of monks than to Brendan as abbot. These findings not only call into question the form of the first *Navigatio* text but also the origin of the image of the abbot and the community. They also underline the idea that suppositions about the origin of the *Navigatio* based on the provenance of manuscripts (i.e. the origins of the text in Lotharingia as defended by Carl Selmer) should be limited to part of the tradition and have nothing to contribute as far as the origin of the text as a whole is concerned.

The articles by Anna Maria Fagnoni (‘Oriental Eremitical Motifs’), Giovanni Orlandi (‘Brendan and Moses’) and, in part, Martin McNamara shed light on the substantial influence on the Brendan legend of the Old Testament. Brendan has been modelled on the figure of Moses and on tales about the desert fathers, especially the *Vita Pauli*, which must have been well known in Ireland and were obviously a source of inspiration; they may even perhaps have been quoted literally by the author of the *Navigatio*. As may be concluded from these three articles and from Nascimento’s findings, the modifications introduced into the *Navigatio* in the course of its transmission cannot be ascribed merely to scribal errors. Copyists and authors changed the text deliberately, to adapt it to the circumstances and expectations of their own audiences. On the basis of a meticulous study of one of the most famous episodes in the *Navigatio*, which describes Brendan’s meeting with fallen angels in the form of birds, Peter Christian Jacobsen explains that subsequent copyists adapted parts of this episode on purpose. They suspected that ideas on the existence of neutral angels were a theological minefield and might give rise to suspicions that heretical thoughts on the part of the Church Father Origen were being defended.

The vernacular stories based on the *Navigatio* show very clearly that their authors shaped the story of the *Navigatio* to their own needs and to the desires of their audiences. Glyn Burgess concentrates on the role of animals in Benedeit’s early twelfth-century Anglo-Norman version. He concludes that Benedeit used animal episodes to give the tale a clear and balanced structure and to create a dramatic

centre for his narrative. Benedeit, he argues, maintained the liturgical aspect of the *Navigatio*, but highlighted with his new structure the notion of quest and self-knowledge, notions which became central to twelfth-century vernacular romances, such as those of Chrétien de Troyes. As Carsten Wollin states in his article on Benedeit's Anglo-Norman poem and its Latin reworking by the learned Latin poet Walter of Châtillon, the latter used Benedeit's text as the source of a restylisation in which he could parade his wide reading of the Latin classics and his position as a modern and learned poet of the middle of the twelfth century.

About the same time as Walter of Châtillon wrote his Brendan poem, in the Rhineland, in the region between Trier and Cologne, the text which is known as *Sankt Brandans Reise/De Reis van Sint Brandaan* came into being. This *Reise* version spread within the Dutch and German regions and it has a character of its own. Walter Haug digs deep into the stemmatic problems of this version, arguing that there must have been two narrative structures of the *Reise*, one in which Brendan had to replace a well-described book as found in the Low German version (represented by manuscript N) and one in which his voyage is an atonement for his sins. His findings grant an important place to the ancestor of the Low German version. In accordance with Haug's findings concerning the treatment of the *Navigatio*, his arguments make it clear that later authors of Brendan stories did not follow their sources slavishly and sometimes adapted them to their own narrative concepts. In her article 'Between Angel and Beast' Clara Strijbosch compares one episode of the *Reise* (the same famous episode which Jacobsen took as a starting point for his article) with the twelfth-century German travel story of *Herzog Ernst*. She argues that both authors adapted the episode to the taste, knowledge and desires of their lay audience, who had developed a vivid interest in stories of travels beyond the borders of the known world. Concentrating on the late-medieval diffusion of the *Reise* in a series of illustrated manuscripts and printed versions from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Karl Zaenker explores the little-studied connections between text and illustration. He concludes that the woodcuts in the printed versions aimed at the visual stimulation of the reader through often stereotypical representation, whereas in the hand-drawn coloured pictures in the two manuscripts h and m the writing and burning of a book plays a main role. In the manuscripts the didactic intention of the Brendan legend with regard to the presence of



marvels in both the book and Creation had clearly been translated into the images. The popularity of the *Reise* in the new, late-medieval media of print and illustration, shows that the twelfth-century device of using Brendan's voyage as a way of filling a book was, around 1500, still considered an interesting concept.

All the articles, though starting out from different perspectives and concentrating on different versions of the Brendan legend, testify to the fact that Brendan has been a versatile saint and that stories about his life and travels have appealed to authors and readers for more than a thousand years. Texts on Brendan have been reworked and adapted from the seventh to the twentieth century in Ireland and, from the tenth century onwards, in the whole of western Europe. From the fourteen contributions in this volume it appears that the key issues concerning the Brendan texts are the interrelated problems of textual and literary embedding of the Brendan stories. The interests of researchers have obviously shifted from sources to the different stages of changes to, and development of, the story. Though many areas of research have been opened up by the articles in this volume, they demonstrate that much remains to be explored. Desiderata, for example, are a closer study of (a) the relationship between the Irish and Latin *Vitae*, (b) the similarity of the *Navigatio* and the Brendan texts in general to other hagiographies or travel stories, (c) the provenance of many of the smaller texts and (d) the reception of the Brendan texts. The authors hope that the contributions in this volume will stimulate new research in these and other areas on the legend of Saint Brendan.



## THE USE OF ANIMALS IN BENEDEIT'S VERSION OF THE BRENDAN LEGEND

Glyn S. Burgess

Even a superficial reading of the more substantial versions of the *Voyage of St Brendan* reveals the important role played by animals, birds or fish (I shall henceforth use the term animal to cover these three categories).<sup>1</sup> My aim here is to examine the use of animals in one particular vernacular version, the Anglo-Norman version by Benedeit, but hoping that this will also contribute to the study of animals within the Brendan corpus as a whole. I shall not attempt on this occasion to comment on the possible sources of the various animal references, whether classical, primitive Irish, or Christian, or to compare and contrast Benedeit's animals with those in other literary texts; this has been done to a great extent by Jacqueline Borsje in her book *From Chaos to Enemy* and by Clara Strijbosch in *The Seafaring Saint*. When looking at how Benedeit has adapted the various animal references in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, I shall bear in mind the statements made in the edition of the text by E. G. R. Waters, that Benedeit adopted an 'independent attitude' towards his source and that his version is effectively a 'complete re-telling' of the original (pp. ciii-civ).<sup>2</sup> We do not, of course, know precisely which text of the *Navigatio* was available to Benedeit, whose poem was composed in the first quarter of the twelfth century (in the first few years of the century if the patron was Matilda, Henry I's first wife, or shortly after 1121 if it was his second wife, Adeliza).

We can begin by noting that of the four islands visited seven times on the cyclical journey made by Brendan and his monks (henceforth

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<sup>1</sup> On animals in the *Life of St Brendan* (*Vita Brendani*, *Betha Brénainn*), see Dorothy A. Bray, *A List of Motifs in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints*, Helsinki 1992 (FF Communications, 252) and Mary Donatus, 'Beasts and Birds in the Lives of Early Saints', unpublished dissertation, University of Pennsylvania 1934.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Anglo-Norman poem is therefore to be regarded, not as a translation, but as a complete re-telling of the story contained in the *Navigatio*' (E. G. R. Waters, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan by Benedeit, a Poem of the Early Twelfth Century*, Oxford 1928, repr. Genève 1974, p. civ).

just 'the monks') three take their names from their association with animals: the Island of Sheep, the Giant Fish and the Island (or Paradise) of Birds. Within the list of islands visited on the journey, these three islands occur consecutively, as the second, third and fourth islands visited (after the Uninhabited Island), and none of the islands visited only once is, or could be, named after an animal. In addition, three of the most dramatic events in the poem revolve around animals, the two battles at sea and the huge and cruel-looking fish which, visible beneath the water, frighten the monks but not Brendan himself. The only animal episode omitted by Benedeit from the *Navigatio* is the one in which a bird drops a bunch of grapes into the monks' boat.

The first allusion to animals within the narrative is not to live creatures but to dead ones: the oxen whose hides serve as a covering for the monks' boat. Brendan has the wooden structure of the boat covered on the outside with oxhide: '*Defors l'avolst de quir bovin*' (vs. 176).<sup>3</sup> The boat's covering is mentioned again later when we are told that the monks stitch oxhides over the boat during their stay on the Island of Birds: '*De quirs de buf la percusent*' (vs. 597). This detail concerning repairs made to the boat is not found in the *Navigatio*. In general, it could be said that, as they sail from Ireland to Paradise and back, the monks are conveyed by a form of animal, as the oxhide gives the boat, and perhaps the monks themselves, the special strength needed to cope with the rigours of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Navigatio* the first live animal encountered by the monks is the dog which greets the monks as they walk along the shore of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ed. Ian Short and Brian Merrilees, Manchester 1979. Translations are my own. My translation of Benedeit's version can be found in W. R. J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2000, 74–102.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Navigatio* the boat is ribbed with wood and has a wooden frame. It is covered with oxhide tanned with the bark of oak and all the joints of the hide are smeared on the outside with fat. The monks take with them two hides for making two further boats and fat for preparing the hides, but these are not mentioned again (ch. 4, p. 8). Translations from and references to the *Navigatio* are taken from the translation by John J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan, Journey to the Promised Land. Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, Mountrath (Portlaoise) 1978 (first trade ed.) (Dolmen texts, 1), repr. Dublin 1981, 1985, Gerrards Cross 1991, 1999. References to the Latin text are taken from the edition by Carl Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Medieval Studies, 16), repr. Blackrock (Dublin) 1989.

Uninhabited Island and acts as their guide.<sup>5</sup> Benedeit omits this motif, and he does not mention that on the table prepared for them the monks find loaves and fish; in his version they find 'a supply of food' (*'sucurs de viande'*, vs. 289). Benedeit's first live animals are sheep.<sup>6</sup> On leaving the Uninhabited Island, the monks sail until they reach an island on which they see a large quantity of fat, white sheep:

*Veient berbiz a grant fuisun,  
A chescune blanche tuisun.  
Tutes erent itant grandes  
Cum erent li cers par ces landes.* (vss 387–90)

(They saw great numbers of sheep, all with white fleece; they were as large as stags in this country.)

Benedeit does not go as far as the author of the *Navigatio*, who states that the ground was invisible because of the various flocks of sheep (ch. 9, p. 15). Nor does he mention the plentiful supply of fish to be found in the streams on this island. In the Latin version the sheep are said to be bigger than *boues* 'oxen' (ch. 9, p. 19, O'Meara translates as 'cattle', p. 17), whereas Benedeit compares them to the stags to be found in the pastureland (*'par ces landes'*, vs. 390) in his own country, presumably Britain.<sup>7</sup> Brendan tells the monks to take a sheep for Easter: *'De izez berbiz une pernez, / Al di pascal la cunrëez'* ('take one of these sheep and prepare it for Easter Day', vss 399–400). Benedeit has here simplified the Latin version, in which Brendan initially asks the monks to take what they need from the flock; they take one sheep and lead it to Brendan,<sup>8</sup> who then asks one of them to take from the flock a 'spotless lamb' (ch. 9, p. 15).<sup>9</sup> In both versions the

<sup>5</sup> 'As they were walking along the cliffs of the sea, a dog ran across them on a path and came to the feet of Saint Brendan as dogs usually come to heel to their masters. Saint Brendan said to his brothers: "Has not God sent us a good messenger? Follow him"' (ch. 6, p. 11).

<sup>6</sup> The *Navigatio* had already referred to metaphorical sheep, when Mernóc's monks are said to have been wandering in the wood without a shepherd whilst he was away visiting a nearby island with his father Barrind (ch. 1, p. 5). Benedeit also omits the reference to the brothers on Mernóc's island who come swarming 'like bees' to meet Barrind on his arrival (ch. 1, p. 3).

<sup>7</sup> The principal clue to Benedeit's public and background is that he wrote for the court of Henry I (vss 1–18).

<sup>8</sup> 'When they had tied it by the horns, it followed the brother who held the rope in his hand as if it were tame to the place where the man of God was standing' (ch. 9, p. 16).

<sup>9</sup> The 'spotless lamb' is mentioned again in the *Navigatio*; it is sacrificed on the second visit to the moving island (ch. 15, p. 37) and also on the Island of Three

sheep form the subject of a discussion between Brendan and the messenger who arrives with a supply of food.

The messenger tells the monks to go and celebrate Easter on a nearby island, but this new island turns out to be another of the animals present in the narrative.<sup>10</sup> In one of the best-known episodes in the legend, Brendan, knowing the true nature of the island, remains behind on the boat, but as his monks light their fire to make the Easter sacrifice the island begins to move; they scramble back on board the boat, getting their clothes soaked in the process. This is the first occasion on which an animal has been used to create excitement for the audience; there is also an element of comedy here. It is now Brendan's turn to explain the nature of one of the animals in the narrative:

*'Freres, savez  
Pur quei poür oït avez?  
N'est pas terre, ainz est beste  
U nus feïmes nostre feste.'* (vss 467–70)

(“Brothers, do you know what frightened you? It is not an island on which we performed our celebration; rather it is a beast”).

Benedeit omits the detail found in the *Navigatio* that this giant fish is ‘always trying to bring his tail to meet his head, but he cannot because of his length’ (ch. 10, p. 19).<sup>11</sup> The *Navigatio* names the fish as Jasconius, but Benedeit does not do so, at least at this stage in the narrative. When he later tells us that the creature had retained the monks’ cauldron, he refers to it as *li jacoines* (vs. 837), but this appears to be a common noun (Short and Merrilees gloss it as ‘great fish’) rather than a proper noun (Waters, however, prints *li Jacoines*).<sup>12</sup>

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Choirs (‘then they offered up the spotless lamb and all came to communion’, ch. 17, p. 45).

<sup>10</sup> Brendan asks why they are so large: ‘*E dist l’abes: “Berbiz ad ci,/Unc en nul leu tant grant ne vi”*’ (vss 417–18). As they head for the next island visit, the monks take with them a sheep which thus creates a link between two islands and two episodes.

<sup>11</sup> Waters thought this detail was ‘quite out of place here’ and suggested that it was not in the copy of the *Navigatio* used by Benedeit (p. lxxxviii).

<sup>12</sup> We can note that of the four manuscripts which preserve this section of Benedeit’s story, only MS A has the reading *jacoines* (from Irish *iasc* ‘fish’, see Selmer, *Navigatio*, pp. 100–01). MS D has *li peisuns* and MS E *la balaine*. On Jasconius see Jacqueline Borsje, *From Chaos to Enemy. Encounters with Monsters in early Irish Texts. An Investigation Related to the Process of Christianization and the Concept of Evil*, Steenbrugge and Turnhout 1996 (Instrumenta Patristica, 29), 124–29.

Benedeit also omits the detail in the Latin of the monks carrying raw meat from the boat to the new 'island' in order to preserve it with salt (ch. 10, p. 18). When the monks return to this moving island on their circuit, it is called simply 'the fish' or 'the beast':

*Turnerent s'en al samadi  
E vunt siglant sur le peisun.* (vss 832–33)  
*E chescun an freiz la feste  
De la Pasche sur la beste.* (vss 879–80)  
*E bien sevent qu'or ad set anz  
Que li peisuns est lur servanz.* (vss 1617–18)

On leaving the Giant Fish, the monks sail for a long time and eventually land on a lofty island, where they see a tree covered with birds:

*Al chef del duit out une arbre  
Itant blanche cume marbre,  
E les fuïles mult sunt ledes,  
De ruge e blanc taceledes.  
De haltece par vedue  
Muntout le arbre sur la nue;  
Des le sumêt desque en terre  
La brancheie mult la serre  
E ledement s'estent par l'air,  
Umbraiet lui e tolt le clair,  
Tute asise de blancs oiseus:  
Unches nul hom ne vit tant beus.* (vss 489–500)

(At the head of the stream was a tree, as white as marble; it had very broad leaves spotted with red and white. The tree rose towards the clouds, as far up as the eye could see; from its summit, right down to the ground, it was a mass of thick branches, extending over a wide area. Casting shade a good distance around and completely blocking out the light, the tree was covered all over with white birds; none more beautiful have ever been seen.)

Brendan is surprised to see so many birds ('*si grant plentét des oiseus*', vs. 504) and he is anxious to know what the place is to which he has come ('*quel leu ço seit u est venuz*', vs. 505). This time it is one of the inhabitants of the island, a talking bird, who provides him with details of the island's nature, and we learn that the island takes its name from the birds: '*Le num del leu que tu qesis, / C'est as Oiseus li Parais*' ('the name of this place, about which you enquired, is the

Paradise of Birds', vss 543–44).<sup>13</sup> In the *Navigatio*, unlike Benedeit's version, the monks already knew that they were heading towards an island called the Paradise of Birds, as they had been informed of this by the messenger who had visited them on the Island of Sheep (ch. 9, p. 17). The bird lands on the boat as the monks arrive ('*L'un des oiseus s'en devolat*', vs. 508) and it appears again as they depart ('*Ast vus l'oiseil desur le mast*', vs. 611). Although he maintains the overall structure of this episode, Benedeit makes a number of changes to the bird's reply to Brendan's enquiry and, whereas in the *Navigatio* it is only on holy days that the island's inhabitants take the form of birds, in Benedeit's version the metamorphosis seems to be permanent. Benedeit omits all the words of the versicles sung by the birds and he reduces the list of canonical hours they sing.

The Island of Birds, like the Island of Sheep and the Giant Fish, becomes part of the monks' annual circuit. In the Latin version the monks are said to return to the 'Island of the birds' (pp. 15, 27), whereas in Benedeit it is simply to 'the birds':

*Alat s'en tost e curt li sainz*  
*Vers les oiseus u furent ainz.* (vss 847–48)

*Vers les oiseals tut dreit en vunt*  
*La u dous meis sujumerunt.* (vss 1623–24)

So, as the monks progress, it is the sheep, the fish and the birds, rather than the islands themselves, which become the objects of their quest, and at the same time their preparation for Paradise. The animals serve to identify their island and to convey its essence. Like the other messengers, the talking bird creates a link between God and the monks by conveying to them information which could only have had its source in God Himself. On their first visit, the bird tells them they have been travelling for a year and have six more years ahead of them before reaching Paradise (vss 545–48). It also informs them that they will return annually to the Giant Fish (vss 551–52) and that their next island visit will be to the Island of Ailbe (vss 617–18). The bird thus links the past to the present and the future, preparing the monks both for the fourth and last of the cyclical islands and for their subsequent journey. On their second visit

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<sup>13</sup> O'Meara makes the bird feminine ('she sat on the edge of the prow', ch. 11, p. 20) on the basis of the gender of Latin *avis* (*una de illis auibus uolabat de arbore*, ch. 11, p. 23). The Anglo-Norman *oise(i)l* is masculine.



to the Island of Birds, they receive further information from the bird concerning their journey (vss 873–80).

After the visit to the Island of Ailbe, the monks encounter the first of the two combats between animals. The first battle, vss 893–952, is situated right in the middle of the text, which contains in all 1834 lines (1840 lines in Waters' edition). As they sail over the sea, in comparative tranquillity, the monks are suddenly terrified by the sight of a fire-breathing animal which is bearing down on them:

*Vers eals veint uns marins serpenz  
Chi enchaced plus tost que venz.  
Li fus de lui si enbraise  
Cum buche de fornaise:  
La flamme est grant, escalfed<sup>14</sup> fort,  
Pur quei icil crement la mort.  
Sanz mesure grant ad le cors;  
Plus halt braiet que quinze tors.  
Peril n'i oust fors sul de denz,  
Sil fuissent mil e cinc cenx.  
Sur les undes que il muveit,  
Pur grant turment plus n'estuveit. (vss 905–16)*

(A sea-serpent came towards them, pursuing them more swiftly than the wind. The flames coming from it burned as brightly as firewood in a furnace; the blaze was huge and burning hot, causing them to fear for their lives. The body was extraordinarily large and it bellowed louder than fifteen bulls; its teeth alone would have been a great threat to them, even if there had been fifteen hundred of them in the boat.<sup>15</sup> On the surface, the waves which it churned up were like those created by a great storm.)

This animal is called by Benedeit a 'marins serpenz', whereas the *Navigatio* merely describes it as a 'beast of immense size' (*bestia immense*, ch. 16, Selmer, p. 45).<sup>16</sup> In the Latin version it spouts foam (*spumas*) from its nostrils, not fire as in Benedeit. The latter's description of the animal's 'fiery breath, bull-like bellowings and fearsome teeth' is not found in the *Navigatio*. We can also observe that Benedeit introduces into this passage, by way of comparison, an animal new to the text, a bull (vs. 912). Benedeit likes to comment on the motif of

<sup>14</sup> I have corrected *escalfed* here to *escalfed*.

<sup>15</sup> The meaning of vss 913–14 remains uncertain. See my note to these lines in Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, 346.

<sup>16</sup> On the Latin terminology used for animals in the *Navigatio* and other hagiographical texts see Borsje, *From Chaos to Enemy*, esp. chapter 2.

sound and he has Brendan describe the ferocious sea creature as a *'beste qui muit'* ('a roaring beast', vs. 924), a detail absent from the Latin text. In the Latin, but not in Benedeit, Brendan asks God to deliver them just as he had delivered David from Goliath and Jonah from the belly of the whale.

Benedeit's Brendan states that this beast will not be an object of fear, and shortly after his prayer to God the first animal is provided with an adversary, simply called an *'altre beste'* ('another beast'; in the Latin it is an *'ingens belua'* 'mighty monster'):

*Altre beste veient venir  
 Qui bien le deit cuntretenir.  
 Dreit cume ceste vers la nef traist,  
 L'altre qui vient a rage braist.  
 Ceste cunuit sa guarrere:  
 Guerpit la nef, traist s'arere.  
 Justedes sunt les dous bestes;  
 Drechent forment halt les testes;  
 Des narines li fous lur salt,  
 Desque as nûes qui volet halt.  
 Colps se dument de lur noës,  
 Tels cum escuz, e des podes.  
 A denz mordanz se nafrent,  
 Qui cum espiez trenchant erent.  
 Salt ent li sanz des aigres mors  
 Que funt li denz en cez granz cors;  
 Les plaies sunt mult parfundes,  
 Dun senglantes sunt les undes.  
 La bataille fud estulte:  
 En la mer out grant tumulte.  
 E puis venquit la dereine;  
 Morte rent la primereine:  
 A denz tant fort la detirat  
 Que en tres meitez le descirat.  
 E puis que fist la vengeance,  
 Realat a sa remanance. (vss 927–52)*

(They saw another beast coming to attack the first one; as the first beast was heading straight for the boat, the second roared with rage at its approach. The first beast, recognizing its opponent, turned away from the boat and drew back; raising their heads very high, the two beasts began to fight, fire spewing forth from their nostrils and rising swiftly up towards the clouds. They gave each other blows with their fins, which they used like shields, and with their claws. With teeth as sharp as spears they cut and wounded each other; blood spurted forth from the violent bites which their teeth made in their huge bodies and

the wounds were very deep and the waves stained with blood. The battle was fierce and the sea greatly disturbed. Finally, the second beast won the day, killing the first and tearing it so violently with its teeth that it ripped it into three parts. Having achieved its act of vengeance, it returned to its lair.)

This entire description of the battle, one of Benedeit's most effective passages, is lacking in the *Navigatio*, where Brendan merely asks the monks to note the great deeds of their Saviour, to observe 'how the beasts obey their Creator' and to await the outcome which will cause them no harm and 'redound to the glory of God'. The result of the battle, the rending of the first beast into three pieces, is, however, found in both texts.<sup>17</sup>

The next day the monks sight land and disembark. In due course a storm sets in and the 'third part' of the first animal, presumably the rear, is driven towards the shore by strong winds ('*Del peisun veint la terce part*', vs. 982); this provides a welcome source of food. Benedeit has modified this episode considerably, for in the Latin text the 'end portion' of the animal is waiting for them when they reach the island, and Brendan tells the monks to take enough food from the carcass for three months since that night it was going to be devoured by beasts. In the Latin text there is an interesting scene in which the monks later return to the animal in order to see whether Brendan's prophecy has been carried out, whereupon Brendan remarks to them: "I know my sons, that you wanted to test me, to see if I spoke the truth or not". The Latin Brendan then mentions a second 'portion of a fish', which would arrive that night and be a source of food. When it arrives, he tells the monks to preserve it in salt (ch. 16, p. 42).

No sooner have the monks put to sea again than they encounter a second battle, this time between a griffin and a dragon:

*De miracles Deus ne cesset:  
 Altre peril les apreset.  
 Si fust primers, ne fust meindres  
 Icilz perilz, enz fust graindres.  
 Mais ne crement pur le purpens  
 Qu'il unt de Deu, e le defens.  
 Uns grips flammanz de l'air descent,*

<sup>17</sup> On sea monsters see Claude Lecouteux, *Les Monstres dans la pensée médiévale européenne*, Paris 1993, 2nd ed. 1995, 39–41.

*Pur eals prendre les ungles tent,  
 E flammantes ad les goès  
 E trenchantes fort les poès.  
 Bord de la nef n'i ad si fort  
 Sul od l'ungle que ne l'en port;  
 Pur sul l'air e le sun vent  
 Pur poi la nef achant ne prent.  
 Cum les caçout eisi par mer,  
 Vint uns draguns flammanz mult cler;  
 Mot les eles, tent le col,  
 Vers le gripun drechet sun vol.  
 La bataile est sus en l'air:  
 Li fus des dous fait grant esclair;  
 Colps e flammes e morz e buz  
 Se entredunent veiant eals tuz.  
 Li grips est granz, draguns maigres;  
 Cil est plus fort, cil plus aigres.  
 Morz est li grips, en mer chaît:  
 Vengét en sunt ki l'unt haît.  
 Vait s'en draguns, portet victorie;  
 Cil en rendent Deu la glorie. (vss 1001–28)*

(God's miracles never cease. Another danger now beset them; had this one been the first, the danger it posed would not have been any the less, in fact it would have been greater. But the confidence they had in God and his protection meant that they were not afraid. A flaming griffin swooped down from the sky and stretched out its claws to seize them; its jaws were afire, its claws very sharp. It could have carried away in its claws any plank in the ship, however strong the timber might be. As a result of its violent approach and the wind which it generated, the ship nearly capsized; but whilst it was pursuing them over the sea in this way, a dragon arrived, flaming in all its brilliance; it flapped its wings, stretched out its neck and directed its course towards the griffin. The battle took place in the air above them and the flames from the two of them lit up the sky; in sight of everyone, they attacked each other with blows, flames, bites and thrusts. The griffin was huge and the dragon slender; the former was the stronger, the latter the fiercer. The griffin was killed and fell into the sea, so those who had dreaded it were avenged; the dragon departed, having won its victory. The monks gave thanks to God in his glory.)

In the *Navigatio* the creature which attacks the griffin is not a dragon but the bird which had earlier brought the monks a branch of an unknown tree, bearing at its tip 'a cluster of grapes of extraordinary redness' (ch. 18, p. 46). In the Latin text the monks are afraid that the griffin will devour them (ch. 19, p. 48), but Benedeit uses this episode to show that the monks have overcome the fear they felt

when faced with the *'marinz serpenz'*. As in the first animal combat, Benedeit adds details concerning both the combatants and the battle which are absent from the Latin version, but he does not follow the Latin text and say that the griffin tried to devour the other bird or that the griffin's eyes were torn out, after which it flew high into the sky where it was pursued and killed (ch. 19, p. 48). Moreover, this is not the only occasion on which Benedeit mentions dragons. When the monks are about to enter Paradise, they discover that it is guarded by dragons: *'Draguns i at qui la guardent;/Si cum fus trestut ardent'* ('dragons, burning like fire, were there to guard it', vss 1705–06). Before they can enter, the dragons have to be appeased by the guide: *'Puis dulcement les ad baisez,/E les draguns tuz apaisez'* ('he quietened the dragons, making them lie on the ground', vss 1721–22).<sup>18</sup> In the *Navigatio* there is no reference to the monks entering through the gates of Paradise and no dragons are mentioned at any stage in the narrative.

Symbolically, the griffin and the dragon are remarkably well matched, no doubt deliberately so.<sup>19</sup> Both animals are an amalgam of other creatures, on the one hand the lion and the eagle, on the other hand the 'dominant parts of many animals';<sup>20</sup> in each case the combination creates power and the ability to cause destruction and instil terror. Both animals are renowned as guardians of treasure, especially gold, and both are ambivalent in that they can represent good or evil. The griffin frequently symbolized the Devil, but Dante, for example, used it as a symbol of Christ. The griffin could represent knowledge, valour and magnanimity, but also the cruel power of the Devil. The dragon could be a 'beneficent, life-giving power, controlling storms, seas, rivers', but it was also 'the malign force of evil'.<sup>21</sup> In Benedeit's narrative both animals are described as *'flammanz'*

<sup>18</sup> Dragons are mentioned in the *Chanson de Roland* in the same context as griffins and serpents: *'Serpenz e guivres, dragon e averser,/Grifunz i ad plus de trente millers'* (vss 2543–44, ed. F. Whitehead, 2nd ed., Oxford 1946). Elsewhere in this text the term *dragon* means 'standard' (vss 1480, 3266, 3330, 3548, 3550).

<sup>19</sup> For what follows see principally Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces. A Guide to Animal Symbolism*, London 1974, 66–70, 87–88, and Lecouteux, *Les Monstres*, 37–38, 47–50. Both the *Navigatio* and Benedeit's version make use of the griffin's famed ability to carry a heavy weight, in some traditions an ox. On the griffin see also Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, transl. Thea Summerfield, Dublin 2000, 63–64, 69–72, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Rowland, *Animals*, 67.

<sup>21</sup> Rowland, *Animals*, 66.

and only the dragon's extreme fierceness (*'Li grips est granz, draguns maigres; / Cil est plus fort, cil plus aigres'*, vss 1023–24) gives it victory.

In the Anglo-Norman version, but not in the *Navigatio*, the second battle at sea leads on directly to a further episode which is again dominated by animals. Brendan begins to sing loudly and the monks are afraid, for beneath the water they can see the reaction of the fish which, in their view, threaten their safety:

*'Beal pere chers, chante plus bas,  
U si ço nun, murir nus fras;  
Quar tant cler' est chascun' unde  
U la mer est parfunde  
Que nus veïim desque en terre,  
E de peïssuns tant guerre.  
Peïssuns veïim granz e criëls,  
Unc n'oïmes parler de tels.  
Si la noise les en commout,  
Sachez, murir nus estout.'  
L'abes surrist e les blasmat,  
E pur mult fols les aësmat:  
'Seignurs, de rien pur quei dutez?  
Vos créances cum debutez!  
Perilz avez suffert plus granz;  
Vers tuz vus fud Deus bons guaranz.  
Uncore ne vus vint cist.  
Clamez culpe!'; Brandans lur dist.  
Chantat plus halt e forment cler.  
Sailent bestes ruïstes de mer,  
Vunt costeant la nef enturn,  
Goïsant la feste del jurn.  
Puis q'unt chantét que al jurn partint,  
Chescun peïssun sa veie tint.'* (vss 1039–62)

("Fair lord, dear father, sing more quietly; if you do not you will be the death of us all. For where the sea is deep, each wave is so clear that we can see right to the bottom, where we can see a host of fish; so large and fierce are the fish we can see that we have never heard of any like them. Should the noise arouse them, we would not, you must realize, escape death." Considering them most unwise, the abbot smiled and rebuked them: "My lords, why are you afraid of such a thing? How you abandon your beliefs! You have endured dangers greater than this and God was always there to protect you all; something like this has never befallen you before. Repeat your *mea culpa*", said Brendan to them. He sang more loudly and very clearly; the fierce sea-creatures rose up and swam all round the ship, rejoicing in the day's celebrations. After the monks had sung the hymns appropriate to the day, each fish went its way.)

The Latin text states that the monks could have touched the fish, which were lying on the sand below the water 'like herds lying in pastures'; they were so numerous that 'they looked like a city of circles as they lay, their heads touching their tails' (ch. 21, p. 49).<sup>22</sup> The Latin Brendan reminds his monks at this point that they had not been afraid of 'the devourer and master of all the fish of the sea', on whose back they had sat and sung psalms. In Benedeit's version the fish specifically join in the St Peter's Day celebration; in the Latin text they keep their distance, swimming in a wide arc.

At this point in his story Benedeit follows the author of the *Navigatio* in largely abandoning animals for a time to concentrate on other features. One reason for this, no doubt, is to give the story some variety. In the volcanic island episode, and the visit to Judas, animals are merely mentioned for purposes of comparison. The demon is said to carry more weight than ten oxen (*Fais a dis bofs bien i aveit*, vs. 1146) and Judas compares himself to a lamb cast to the wolves (*"Jo sui li fels qui Deu haii/Le simple agnel as lus trahi"*, vss 1281–82). Benedeit does not include Judas's reference in the *Navigatio* to the Biblical monster Leviathan: 'Leviathan and his attendants are there [in the centre of the mountain]. I was there when he swallowed your brother' (ch. 25, p. 57).<sup>23</sup>

There is, however, one more important animal episode in the narrative. When Paul the Hermit tells Brendan about his early life on his island, he alludes to the role played in it by a helpful otter:

*Uns lutres fud qui m'aportout  
Suvent peisun dun il me pout  
Tuz dis tres jurs en la semaine;  
Unckes nule ne fud vaine  
Que treis peisuns ne me portast  
Dun aveie pleiner past.  
Al col pendud marin werec  
Plein un sacel portout tut sec  
Dun mes peisuns pouse quire.  
Par qui ço fud, bien est sire!  
Es primers anz que vinc ici  
Tuz les trent' anz fui poïd si.*

<sup>22</sup> This allusion to the creatures' heads touching their tails is reminiscent of the observation concerning Jasconius, which was always trying to bring its tail to meet its head (ch. 10, p. 19).

<sup>23</sup> For comments on Leviathan see Borsje, *From Chaos to Enemy*, 117–18.

*Des peisuns fui poïd si bien  
 N'oi mester de beivre rien;  
 N'enmuïout puint nostre Seignur  
 De del cunreid ne de greignur.  
 Puis les trent' anz ne revint cil.* (vss 1565–81)

(“There was an otter which regularly, three days each week, brought me fish and fed me with it; never did a week go by when it did not bring me three fishes, each of which provided me with a complete meal. Round its neck hung a satchel packed full of dry seaweed, with which I could cook my fish. He who provided all this was a true Lord! For the first thirty years of my stay here, I was fed in that way; I was so well nourished by the fish that I had no need to drink anything. Our Lord did not trouble himself at all to supply such provisions, or anything else in addition. After thirty years, the otter did not return”.)

In the *Navigatio* the otter does not bring seaweed but a bundle of firewood, which it carries between its front paws whilst walking on its two hind legs (ch. 26, p. 64). Like the dragon and the griffin, the otter was an ambivalent animal, often confounded with the hydra; it could symbolize both Christ and the Devil.<sup>24</sup> On a more basic level, the supply of fish which feeds Paul recalls an earlier episode in both versions in which the monks are said to find much-needed fish in a river: ‘They found [...] various kinds of fish swimming along the river-bed into the sea’ (ch. 13, p. 33);<sup>25</sup> ‘*Un duit unt cler e pessuns denz, / E cil em prenent plus que cenx*’ (‘finding a clear stream with fish in it, they caught more than a hundred of them’, vss 799–800). But in the Latin text this episode is situated before the monks have encountered the Coagulated Sea, whereas in the Anglo-Norman version it occurs afterwards. In *Benedeit* there is a final reference to fish, which are found in the rivers of Paradise: ‘*E tut li flum de bon peisun*’ (vs. 1748). The *Navigatio* does not mention either the fish found in Paradise or the game (*veneisun*) which is also present in abundance (‘*Bois repleniz de veneisun*’, vs. 1747).

We should perhaps begin a general examination of the role of animals in *Benedeit*’s version by noting the vocabulary he uses to describe them. The term *animal* does not occur, as this word is not

<sup>24</sup> When identified with the hydrus, the otter could kill a crocodile by entering its mouth and devouring its bowels before reappearing; this was taken as an allegory of Christ’s descent into Hell (Rowland, *Animals*, 129).

<sup>25</sup> In the Latin version Brendan tells the monks to take provisions from the fish and prepare what they need for a meal every third day up to Maundy Thursday (ch. 13, p. 34).



attested in French until the end of the twelfth century; indeed, it is rare before the sixteenth century. The word *beste* is, however, used seven times (vss 469, 552, 880, 924, 927, 933, 1058) to refer to the moving island (the '*pessuns marins*'), the first hostile creature, the adversary of this animal (the '*altre beste*', vs. 927) and the creatures who join in the celebrations on St Peter's Day. First attested in the *Chanson de Roland* (vss 1496, 1598, 2436), the term *beste* applies to any '*être animé*', with the exception of humans.<sup>26</sup> There is one example of *creature*, used by Brendan in an address to the talking bird: '*Si tu es de Deu creature*' (vs. 513); the meaning here seems to be 'creation' rather than 'creature'. The term *peissun* is used fourteen times (vss 471, 478, 799, 833, 982, 1044, 1045, 1062, 1566, 1573, 1578, 1590, 1615, 1618) to refer to both small and large fish, including the moving island. The second battle at sea is between a *grip/gripun* 'griffin' (vss 1007, 1018, 1023, 1025) and a *dragun* 'dragon' (vss 1016, 1023, 1027, see also 1705, 1722). Other animals mentioned in this text are the *agnel* 'lamb' (vs. 1282), *cerf* 'stag' (vs. 390), *lutre* 'otter' (vs. 1565), *lu* 'wolf' (vs. 1282), *serpent* 'snake, serpent' (vs. 905)<sup>27</sup> and *tor* 'bull' (vs. 912). There is also an example of *veneisun* 'game' (vs. 1747). The term *oiseil* etc. is used regularly for 'bird' (vss 499, 504, 508, 517, 519, 578, 611, 848, 850, 852, 868, 1623).

As we have seen, Benedeit omits only one of the animal episodes from the *Navigatio*, the scene in which grapes are delivered to the boat by a great bird. This is presumably the result of his omission of the entire Island of Grapes episode, which necessitated the invention of a new animal to attack the griffin. We can note that, unlike the Dutch/German *Reis*, there are no new animal episodes in Benedeit's version.<sup>28</sup> When Benedeit does retain an animal episode, however, he is never a slavish translator; he regularly makes important changes to his material. Moreover, he has an excellent sense of structure. By omitting the Island of Choirs and the Island of Grapes episodes, situated between the two combats at sea, he is able to create a second

<sup>26</sup> *Le Robert dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (2nd ed., Paris 1998). The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (ed. Louise W. Stone and William Rothwell, London, 1977–92) glosses *beste* as 'animal'.

<sup>27</sup> Short and Merrilees gloss the term *serpenz* as 'sea-serpent'. The term *marin*, used in conjunction with *pessuns* in vs. 478 and *serpenz* in vs. 905, is also found in vs. 1571 (*marin werre* 'seaweed'). For *serpent* the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* gives 'snake, adder' and for *marins serpenz* 'sea-serpent'.

<sup>28</sup> See Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 123–24.

group of three episodes which are closely connected with animals; the first group, consisting of the Island of Sheep, the '*pessuns marins*' and the Island of Birds (vss 370–620), is balanced by the second group, consisting of two animal combats and the 'threatening fish' episode (vss 893–1062). In addition, Benedeit has expanded considerably the two animal combat scenes, linking them merely by the visit to the island on which the monks benefit from the third part of the '*marins serpenz*'. He has thereby created an extremely effective, indeed dramatic, centre for his narrative, based to a great extent on the role of animals.

It is evident that animals perform various functions within Benedeit's story. The most straightforward category is that of food. Throughout the journey Benedeit refers with great frequency to the question of provisions. On the journey itself this role is largely fulfilled by fish, including the '*marins serpenz*' (vss 799, 982, 1566, 1569, 1577, 1590). The observation that the rivers and woods of Paradise contain abundant fish and game (vss 1747–48) suggests that both of these contribute to the diet enjoyed by its inhabitants. But more important is the link between animals and one of the major preoccupations of the contemporary ecclesiastical world: the liturgical year. The journey, indeed time itself, is provided with a certain rhythm within the narrative thanks to the celebration of the major festivals within the Church's calendar, and these are often associated with animals. The term *feste* 'religious feast' occurs eleven times in the text, and there are examples of the adjectives *festals* (vs. 749) and *festival* (vs. 1093)<sup>29</sup> and of the verb *festier* (vs. 842); there is also one occurrence of the verb *celebrier* (vs. 843). The first *feste* to be mentioned is Easter, which is associated initially with the extraordinary white sheep. The monks arrive at the Island of Sheep on Maundy Thursday ('*la ceine*', vs. 393), and so that they can celebrate Easter Day itself ('*la feste faire*', vs. 397). Brendan tells them to take one of the sheep and prepare it for the '*di pascal*' (vss 399–400). The messenger informs the monks that they will celebrate the feast on a neighbouring island ('*En cel isle anuit entras/E ta feste demain i fras*', vss 425–26), which, as we know, turns out to be, on the occasion of the first visit, unsuitable for such activities. We note that when Brendan informs his followers of the true nature of the island he associates *beste* with *feste* at the rhyme: '*N'est*

<sup>29</sup> The term *festival* is used here in the sense 'magnificent', i.e. 'suitable for a feast' (*Anglo-Norman Dictionary*).

*pas terre, ainz est beste/U nus feïmes nostre feste'* (vss 469–70). This association is made again later in the text, this time by the talking bird: *'E chescun an i frez la feste/De la Pasche sur la beste'* (vss 551–52).

When the monks return to the Giant Fish, they find that it has served as a left-luggage office by retaining on its back the cauldron they had left behind in their haste to escape; Benedeit again makes the link between an animal and the motif of celebration:

*Li jacoines l'ad gwardee,  
Or l'unt sur lui retruuee.  
Plus asoïr sur lui estunt,  
E lur feste bele i funt.  
Tute la nuit desque al matin  
De festiër ne firent fin.  
Le di paschur celebrient.* (vss 837–43)

(The great fish had kept it and now they had found it once more upon its back. This time they felt more secure in their stay on the fish and celebrated their festival splendidly, continuing without cease all night until morning; they celebrated Easter Day.)

Moreover, Easter is not the only festival to be associated with animals. Pentecost, or more specifically the octave of Pentecost, is twice linked to the Island of Birds and also to the motif of food: *"Asez averez e sanz custe/As uitaves de Pentecuste"* ("you will easily have enough for the octaves of Pentecost", vss 585–86); *"Ici mandrez e sanz custe/Desque uitaves de Pentecoste"* ("you will remain here without difficulties until the octave of Pentecost", vss 861–62). The episode in which the fish react to Brendan's singing is set on the *feste* of St Peter (*Vint la feste de saint Perrunt*, vs. 1031). The association between celebration and animals is even closer than normal in this episode, for, as we have seen, the fish actually join in the singing and add to the overall effect by their enthusiastic leaping: *'Sailent bestes ruistes de mer,/Vunt costeant la nef enturn,/Goïsant la feste del jurn'* (the fierce sea creatures rose up and swam all round the ship, rejoicing in the day's celebrations', vss 1058–60).

Although the Judas episode is virtually devoid of references to animals, it does contain significant allusions to the Church's annual festivals. Easter and Pentecost, as Judas explains to Brendan, are occasions on which he is given some respite from his sufferings (vss 1311–12). So, if the reference to Easter links Judas's sufferings to the monks' encounter with the sheep, his allusion to Pentecost creates an association with the Island of Birds, a link further strengthened by the

repetition of the concept of *sujurn* 'respite'. The talking bird tells the monks that after a lengthy period of travelling they are in need of *sujurn*: '*Puis les travalz estout sujurn*' (vs. 587). Brendan can only talk to Judas because Sunday is his day of *sujurn*: '*Dimaine trestut le jurn/Desque al vespere ai tel sujurn*' (vss 1305–06).<sup>30</sup>

Another important link within the narrative is that between animals and the four elements.<sup>31</sup> The three forms of animal encountered by the monks (sheep, fish and birds) correspond respectively to three of the elements: land, sea and air. Structurally, the battle between the '*marins serpenz*' and the '*altre beste*', which takes place at sea, recalls the '*pessuns marins*' episode, just as the battle between the griffin and the dragon, which takes place in the air, recalls the Island of Birds episode. Sea is linked to land when part of the '*marins serpenz*' emerges from the sea to provide the monks with food, and air to land when the talking bird flies down through the air and lands on the monks' boat to provide them with information, another vital factor in their eventual success (vss 508, 882). Moreover, Benedeit does not ignore the theme of fire. In the Latin version three of the four animals which fight are fire-breathing creatures, the exception being the first to be mentioned (the 'beast of immense size', ch. 16, p. 39). In the Anglo-Norman version all four animals emit fire from their mouths (vss 907–09, 935, 1007–09, 1016). It was perhaps Benedeit's intention to make the first combat an even contest and to let God, rather than the second beast's fire power, decide the outcome. In his expanded accounts of the battles Benedeit exploits the characteristic of fire, thus creating a thematic link between the combats: '*Des narines li fous lur salt,/Desque as nües qui volet halt*' ('fire spewed forth from their nostrils, rising up towards the clouds', vss 935–36; '*Li fus des dous fait grant esclair;/Colps e flammes e morz e buz/Se entredunent veiant eals tuz*' ('the flames from the two of them lit up the sky; in sight of everyone, they attacked each other with blows, flames, bites and thrusts', vss 1020–22). In the moving island episode it appears to be the fire lit on the back of the creature which causes it to move; this fire is visible from a distance of ten leagues (vss 445–66; in the *Navigatio* the distance is two miles, ch. 10, p. 18).

<sup>30</sup> The term *sujurn* is also used in vss 873 and 1598 with reference to the Island of Birds.

<sup>31</sup> See Glyn S. Burgess, 'Les Fonctions des quatre éléments dans le *Voyage de saint Brendan* par Benedeit', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 38 (1995), 3–22.

Later, Paul the Hermit's otter links sea to land by bringing Paul a supply of fish, and the element of fire is present again as the otter brings Paul a quantity of dry seaweed from which he can make a fire (vss 1571–73).<sup>32</sup>

There can be no doubt that the animals in the narrative are intended to bring the monks closer to God. The three animal islands, visited seven times, are stepping-stones on the route to Paradise. Benedeit seems to have expanded the notion found in the *Navigatio* that the moving island is the 'foremost (*prior*) of all that swim in the ocean' (ch. 10, p. 19). For Benedeit the monks in the episode are paying a visit to the creature which God created before any other beast in the sea (vss 477–78). In other words, the monks have contact in this episode, and renew it on an annual basis, with the origin of things and with the concept of rebirth. Thus they deepen their acquaintance with the natural world and prepare themselves for the visit to Paradise.<sup>33</sup> Their first encounter with the birds provides the monks with a glimpse of Paradise, partly through the name of the island ('*as Oiseus li Parais*', vs. 544) and partly through the contact with, and the knowledge gained from, the metamorphosed angels ("'*angeles sumes*'", vs. 519). The monks learn about Paradise negatively, in that they are told of what the birds have lost:

*La majesté sumes perdant,  
La présence de la glorie,  
E devant Deu la baldorie.* (vss 540–42)

(We are deprived of the majesty of God, the presence of glory and the joy of being before God.)

In the Paul the Hermit episode the otter which brings Paul his fish is clearly a messenger of God, who wanted Paul to have this particular source of food during the first thirty years of his solitary existence. Paul's account of the otter is intended to illustrate just how bountiful God can be. He arrived at his island through God's direction or guidance ('*par Deu asens*', vs. 1540), and once the supply of fish came to an end God provided a substitute to add an extra dimension to Paul's nourishment by making it more spiritual: "*Deus*

<sup>32</sup> See also on the motif of fire Glyn S. Burgess, 'Repetition and Ambivalence in the *Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*', *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. I. Short, London 1993, 61–74, esp. 62–68.

<sup>33</sup> On the concept of knowledge within the text see Glyn S. Burgess 'Savoir and *faire* in the *Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*', *French Studies*, 49 (1995), 257–74.

*ne volt que plus de fors/Venist cunreid pur sul mun cors*” (“God did not want my body alone to have any further provisions from elsewhere”, vss 1583–84). The otter is to Paul what the *‘pessuns marins’* is to the monks, a servant:

*Un sergant oi trent’ anz pleiners,  
De mei servir suveners. (vss 1563–64)*  
*E bien sevent qu’or ad set anz  
Que li peisuns est lur servanz. (vss 1617–18)*

There is a link here with the monks themselves, who are said to be God’s servants (*‘li Deu servant’*, vs. 371), and with Benedeit, the composer of the text, who describes himself as a servant of his patron: *‘Itel servant blamer n’esteot’* (‘one should not find fault with such a servant’, vs. 16).

Animals provide, but they also test. Brendan explains to the monks that the moving island was a test prepared for them by God himself:

*Ne merveillés de ço, seignurs!  
Pur ço vus volt Deus ci mener  
Que il vus voleit plus asener:  
Ses merveilles cum plus verrez,  
En lui puis mult mierz crerez.’ (vss 472–76)*

(“Do not be astonished by this, my lords! God wished to bring you here because he intended to give you the clearest possible lesson; the more you see of his marvels, the more firmly you will believe in him”.)

God’s *merveilles*, says Brendan, have a specific purpose. They are there to instruct (*asener*) those who witness them and to make them believe even more firmly in God. We can thus assume that the two animal combats are also *merveilles*.<sup>34</sup> The first is not referred to specifically as a marvel, but the second is said to be a continuation of God’s unceasing *miracles*: *‘De miracles Deus ne cesset:/Altre peril les apresset’* (‘God’s miracles never cease: another danger now beset them’, vss 1001–02).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The term *merveille* is used three times in the text (vss 419, 475, 1342). There is also one example of the adverb *merveilles* (vs. 380) and four of the verb *merveiller* (vss 472, 501, 1528, 1710). Brendan himself marvels when he sees the birds (*‘prent a merveiller’*, vs. 501).

<sup>35</sup> There is an earlier example in the text of the term *miracle* (Latin *miraculum* ‘marvel’, from the verb *mirari* ‘be amazed’): *‘Par miracles que unt voit’* (vs. 374). The sight of God’s miracles allows the monks to see that God is their protector (vss 371–75).

Again there is an important educational element here, for as soon as the dragon wins its victory Benedeit states that, through the spirit of God, the monks now possess great knowledge (*'Par l'espirit Deu mult sunt savant'*, vs. 1030).

The medieval mind could clearly accommodate and reconcile a wide range of experiences and phenomena. But this did not preclude recognition of the difference between the realistic and the non-realistic. Benedeit uses the first animals encountered, the sheep, to exploit the difference between the merely extraordinary (and therefore realistic) and the marvellous (and thus largely non-realistic). Seeing how large the sheep are, Brendan asks the messenger for an explanation. The reply he receives is:

*N'est merveille:  
Ja ci n'ert traite oëile;  
L'ivers n'en fait raïncune,  
Ne d'enfertêt n'i mort une.'* (vss 419–22)

("This is no marvel. None of the ewes here will ever be milked; the winters are not unpleasant and none of the sheep sicken or die".)

The messenger evidently intends Brendan to accept that there is nothing miraculous or marvellous about the sheep. Their size and abundance can be explained by the environment and therefore they form part of the natural world. Moreover, if we pursue the question of realism from a modern perspective, it is scarcely possible to read the Island of Sheep episode without thinking of the Faeroe Islands, which take their name from sheep. The name Faeroe (the earliest attested form is *Faereyiar*) means 'sheep islands'. Until the twentieth century these islands were primarily a sheep-raising community. They are served by the warm Atlantic Drift and thus have a mild climate with little variation in temperature.<sup>36</sup> The Faeroes were also first settled by Irish monks, probably around the year 700.<sup>37</sup> If one of the large number of islands is to be identified as the Island of Sheep, the most likely candidate is the largest island, Streymoy. In both the *Navigatio* and Benedeit's version the Island of Birds is not far from the Island of Sheep and geographically this would correspond to a journey from Streymoy to Vagar. Vagar is famous for

<sup>36</sup> See Brian Fullerton and Alan F. Williams, *Scandinavia*, London 1972, 136–40, and John F. West, *Faroe. The Emergence of a Nation*, London and New York 1972, esp. 2.

<sup>37</sup> West, *Faroe*, 4.

its huge variety of birds. Geoffrey Ashe, in his book *Land to the West*, states that 'over two hundred varieties have been counted there', and on a visit to the island he encountered a 'bird-symphony' which would be hard to equal.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Benedeit and the author of the *Navigatio* no doubt drew on mariners' tales and traditional stories to lend realism to their accounts of animals and other phenomena, we in our modern world, which retains a great interest in sea creatures, can have recourse to the knowledge accumulated by scientific investigation. The moving island must represent one of the great whales, perhaps the Blue Whale, which is the largest living mammal, indeed the largest ever to have lived on earth, with an average length of nearly 100 feet (30 metres) and weighing up to 170 tons;<sup>39</sup> a specimen measuring 110 feet (33.5 metres) and weighing 200 tons was captured in the early 1900s. Sperm whales migrate to the north around springtime and concentrations of them are found around the Faeroes and Western Iceland.<sup>40</sup>

There can also be little doubt that the struggle between the '*marins serpenz*' and the '*altre beste*' represents mariners' tales concerning the fight between a giant squid and a sperm whale, which has been described as the most awesome encounter to take place in the natural world. The giant squid was originally known as the Kraken, and attempts to catch a live specimen are ongoing. The scientist Michael Bright tells us in his book *There are Giants in the Sea* that for centuries these animals were 'feared by mariners' (p. 141). He points out that mariners who encountered them were right to be afraid, as they possess 'enormous size, power and ferocity' and are capable of pulling over even a sailing ship. No one knows how large the specimens are which have existed and still exist. There is an unauthenticated account of a sighting of a specimen more than 175 feet long (53 metres) with tentacles 24 inches (60 centimetres) thick (pp. 148–49). In 1892, on the West Coast of Canada, a giant squid was found

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<sup>38</sup> Geoffrey Ashe, *Land to the West. St Brendan's Voyage to America*, London 1962, 88. Ashe suggests that the birds encountered by the monks were kittiwakes and arctic terns (ibid.).

<sup>39</sup> Heathcote Williams, *Whale Nation*, London 1988, 28–29. In the *Navigatio* the talking bird actually states that the monks will celebrate Easter 'on the back of the whale' (ch. 15, p. 38; *in dorso belue*, p. 43; see above, n. 12).

<sup>40</sup> Brendan's comment that this creature was the first to be created by God tallies with Genesis 1:21: 'And God created whales, and every living creature which moveth'.



squashed beneath a log boom and one of its arms was more than a 100 feet long (30 metres) and it ended in a large hook; the suckers were basin-plate size tapering to saucer-size at the ends;<sup>41</sup> it would be the suckers which, mistaken for teeth, frightened the monks. The '*altre beste*' will be a sperm whale; these creatures regularly grow to 80 feet (24.4 metres) in length, but specimens up to 200 feet (61 metres) long have been reported.

The fish which join in the celebration of St Peter's Day could be dolphins, but they are more likely to be humpback whales, which are capable of 'highly acrobatic and thrilling aerial display'; they roll, breach and slap their flippers in a display of general surface exuberance.<sup>42</sup> Humpbacks are one of four mammals which can sing, the others being the whitelined bat, the bearded seal and man; they can produce an almost endless variety of sounds and their song can last for up to thirty minutes with no obvious breaks between sequences. All the whales in a given population sing the same song and then change the song each year.<sup>43</sup>

Paul's otter which brings him a supply of fish and seaweed has a strong element of realism. Sea otters eat an abundance of shellfish, which they clutch to their chests and break open with a piece of rock they carry in their forepaw. Floating on their backs in sheltered waters, it could appear that they are bringing food to someone ashore, and they do use seaweed or kelp, which they sling across their bodies like a car seat-belt to stop them from sinking or drifting out to sea whilst asleep.<sup>44</sup>

What conclusions can we draw from Benedeit's use of animals? How do they relate to the overall meaning and purpose of his narrative? Certainly, by retaining all the most important animal episodes he shows that animals are fundamental to the impact of his story. For him animals are an essential element in the monks' experiences and he uses them as an aid to belief in God's power. Their symbolic possibilities (i.e. their association with good and evil, or with

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<sup>41</sup> On another specimen the arms were on average 59 feet long (15.2 metres) with one tentacle 100 feet long (30 metres); the hook was 12 inches long (31 centimetres) and 10 inches (25 centimetres) wide.

<sup>42</sup> François Gohier, *Humpback Whales*, San Luis Obispo (California) 1991, 22.

<sup>43</sup> 'The songs of Humpbacks have been heard for thousands of years by sailors and voyagers' (Gohier, *Humpback Whales*, 12). By St Peter's Day in June the whales would be found far to the north, off Newfoundland and Greenland. One notes that in the following episode the monks encounter an iceberg.

<sup>44</sup> See Ruth Ashby, *Sea Otters*, London and New York 1990.

both) and their ability to inspire fear must have appealed to him. But what was Benedeit's fundamental purpose, other than that of telling a good tale? Cynthia Bourgeault has argued that at the core of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* is monasticism, which forms the 'organizational principle of the text'.<sup>45</sup> By retaining the three animal islands, all of which operate spatially and temporally within the confines of Easter and Pentecost, Benedeit has maintained the liturgical aspect of his source. But he was writing for Henry I's queen and thus presumably for a court audience. His version, which has been called the first romance in French,<sup>46</sup> highlights the notion of quest, self-knowledge and the search for personal harmony (he uses the metre which will become that of the romance, the octosyllabic rhyming couplet). Finally, I do not think that the use of animals supports Waters' notion of a 'complete re-telling' of the *Navigatio*, but, as he never translates word for word and constantly modifies details, one can accept that the animals confirm Waters' view of Benedeit's 'independent attitude' towards his material.

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<sup>45</sup> Cynthia Bourgeault states: 'The *Navigatio* is by all estimates monastic to the core: it is a tale about monks, *by* monks, and at least in its original manuscript context, *for* monks' ('The Monastic Archetype in the *Navigatio* of St Brendan', *Monastic Studies*, 14 (1983) 109–22, 110–11; for comments on the Island of Sheep episode see 117–18 and for the Island of Birds 118–19). On the question of allegory see also Dorothy Bray, 'Allegory in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', *Viator*, 26 (1995) 1–10, repr. in: *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature and History. An Anthology of Criticism*, ed. J. M. Wooding, Dublin 2000, 175–86.

<sup>46</sup> Ruth Dean states that Benedeit's text 'belongs to the category of romance, for it is essentially a good story told for a courtly audience' ('What is Anglo-Norman?', *Annuaire Mediaevale*, 6 (1965), 29–46). M. Dominica Legge calls the text 'a romance in its own right' ('Anglo-Norman Hagiography and the Romances', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 6 (1975), 41–49).

BRENDAN'S EUROPEAN TOUR: THE MIDDLE IRISH  
POEM *MOCHEN, MOCHEN, A BRÉNAIND* AND THE  
CHANGING NATURE OF PILGRIMAGE IN THE  
ELEVENTH CENTURY

Thomas Owen Clancy

The poem *Mochen, mochen a Brénaind* is on the face of it a slightly odd production, and as such has received some quizzical attention over the years. It is a poem of nine quatrains, found in two Irish manuscripts, the *Book of Leinster*<sup>1</sup> (LL, dating to the twelfth century) and the *Book of Uí Mhaine*<sup>2</sup> (M, dating to the end of the fourteenth). Although there are illegible passages in each, most of the poem can be supplied with some confidence. Several important cruces remain, but the basic content is clear. The poem, an edition and translation of which appears in Appendix 1, addresses Brendan directly, praising him for his accomplishments, and especially for his journeys. What has drawn attention is that these journeys seem to bring Brendan east, rather than west: in the first stanza, his fame is heard as far as *Letha*, that is Latium or Rome (1b: though the word can also be translated as 'Brittany'); he is connected with a monastery belonging to Gildas (2d); he has been a pilgrim in *Taprofâne* (Taprobanê, usually identified with Sri Lanka), and at the Jordan (4a, 4c); he has been to Golgotha and Mount Sion (5a, 5c); to the dwelling of the Greeks (7a), and a place called 'the island of the Saviour' (7d); we are told that both Rome and Tours are under his protection (8ab), that staying in Iona and Ailech are his due (8d).

Of course, none of this is the stuff of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*. Although (and I shall need to return to this) stanzas 2, 3 and perhaps 8 are clearly linked in some way with episodes which take place in Britain (or Brittany) in various versions of the *Vita Brendani* and its vernacular relatives,<sup>3</sup> they are the only allusions to what we

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<sup>1</sup> Dublin, Trinity College, MS H 2 18 (cat. no. 1339), ff. 366 and 369 marg.

<sup>2</sup> Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS Stowe D.ii.1 (cat. no. 1225), f. 109v.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief summary of these, see S. Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a Study of the Voyages of St Brendan and St Malo', in: J. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld*

might call 'core' Brendan traditions. The rather basic reference to Brendan moccu Altai's chief monastery of Clonfert in stanza 1, and the final verse's concession to the image of being in a boat, journeying from island to island, need relate to no specific text or tradition. This is rather curious, and seems to place the poem outwith the mainstream of the developing tradition of Brendan hagiography.

The poem was edited with commentary, from the *Book of Leinster* only, by Kuno Meyer in 1912, and then from both manuscripts by H. P. A. Oskamp in 1969; it has since had diplomatic editions in both the LL edition and, with varia from M, by Pádraig Ó Riain.<sup>4</sup> Commentary has been offered only by Meyer, Oskamp and James Kenney. Meyer's view was that it had precipitated out from an otherwise unknown *Life* or *Tale* about Brendan.<sup>5</sup> Meyer pointed to one such poem in the *Book of Lismore* version of the *Betha Brénainn*, and there is a second, and very interesting poetic address to Brendan in that text, put in the voice of the poet-convert Colmán mac Lénine.<sup>6</sup> These poems of address are only found in the Lismore version, and not independently or in the other vernacular version of the *Life of Brendan*,<sup>7</sup> though that text does contain some anecdotes built around poems, and occasional quatrains, some in direct speech. The form of verse monologue or address is well known within the greater run of early Irish literature.<sup>8</sup> All this adds to the plausibility of Meyer's

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*Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, Dublin 2000, 157–74, here 159–60. See also Mac Mathúna's fuller study in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> K. Meyer, 'Ein mittelirisches Gedicht auf Brendan der Meerfahrer', *Sitzungsberichte der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 25 (1912), 436–43; H. P. A. Oskamp, *Mochen, mochen a Brénaind, Éigse*, 13 (1969–70), 92–98; A. O'Sullivan, ed., *The Book of Leinster*, vol. 6, Dublin 1983, pp. 1653, 1676; P. Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Dublin 1985, 184–85.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, 'Gedicht', 441.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; W. Stokes, ed., *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, Oxford 1890, ll. 3809–31, 3463–82. The latter would repay examination. Interesting in light of our poem is stanza 4: *Mu chin bhias ina dhírim/lir lebinn domuin dedhuinn,/fir Eirenn tar ler lilit/co Bright is co Brenuinn*. 'Welcome he who will strike in his course/the level sea of the [...] world,/the men of Ireland will follow across the sea/with Brigit and with Brendan.'

<sup>7</sup> For which, see C. Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn. Lives of Irish Saints*, 2 vols., Oxford 1922, repr. 1997, vol. 1, 44–95; vol. 2, 44–92. For the seventeenth-century manuscript of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh and its dates (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 4190–4200) see Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, p. xii, and the colophon, on vol. 1, 95; vol. 2, 92, which shows that Ó Cléirigh's exemplar for this text was a sixteenth-century manuscript.

<sup>8</sup> On this in general, see P. Mac Cana, 'Notes on the Combination of Prose and Verse in early Irish Narrative', in: S. Tranter and H. L. C. Tristram, ed., *Early*

case: we can imagine, as Meyer did, the poem inserted at a point when Brendan arrives back in Ireland from one of his voyages, addressed by some unknown character in this hypothetical tale.

If so, however, as James Kenney put it, 'the *Voyage of Brendan* is rationalised into a journey to the east', and this makes Meyer's argument for an original narrative from which the poem has precipitated difficult to sustain. Oskamp makes it clearer than Meyer wished to do that there is also a concrete contemporary background to the poem, one based in the pilgrim experience of the eleventh century.<sup>9</sup> Oskamp guessed that the author 'saw in the journeys as described in the *Vita* too much incredible legend, and felt that he had to interpret the *tír tairngire* as the Holy Land'. He differed strongly and I think rightly from Meyer's view, contending that there was so much distance between the contents and environment of the poem on the one hand, and both the *Vita* and *Navigatio* traditions on the other, that it was 'very unlikely' that we are dealing with a poem which descends from a narrative context like a *Life*. Rather 'particularly the last line suggests that we are dealing with a poem meant as an invocation and come into being independently from the existing Brendan texts'.<sup>10</sup>

I believe we can get much closer to the context and purpose of this poem. In order to do so, however, I believe we first need to sketch out something of the nature of pilgrimage in the Gaelic world in the period when this poem was written. Meyer held the poem to be an eleventh-century one on linguistic grounds; Oskamp agreed, and I see no strong reason to dissent; I believe the historical context suits it as well, as will become clear.<sup>11</sup>

The annals of the eleventh century record an impressive series of pilgrimages of Gaels to Rome and points further east, a phenomenon previously discussed by both Aubrey Gwynn and Kathleen

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*Irish Literature. Media and Communication*, Tübingen, 1989, 125–47; M. Tymoczko, 'A Poetry of Masks. The Poet's Persona in Early Celtic Poetry', in: K. Klar, E. Sweetser and C. Thomas, ed., *A Celtic Florilegium. Studies in Memory of Brendan O Hehir*, Lawrence (Mass.) 1996, 187–209.

<sup>9</sup> J. F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland. An Introduction and Guide. I: Ecclesiastical*, New York 1929, 2nd ed. rev. by L. Bieler, New York 1966, repr. Dublin 1979, 418; Oskamp, 'Mochen, mochen', 94–95.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>11</sup> Meyer, 'Gedicht', 437–38; Oskamp, 'Mochen, mochen', 92–93. It can in any case be no later than mid-twelfth century, but the language seems not so late as this.

Hughes.<sup>12</sup> I have listed a collection of these in Appendix 2. These notices appear, in separate 'strands' in chronicles (primarily the *Annals of Ulster* [AU] and *Annals of Innisfallen* [AI]), which do not seem for these matters to share common sources. This suggests, though we would want to investigate further, that we are dealing with an actual social phenomenon or change, rather than simply a change in what one chronicler thought worth recording.<sup>13</sup> Much has been made in the past of the role of the Danish king of England, Cnut, in opening the pilgrim route in 1027.<sup>14</sup> From our point of view, this must be overstated. Several lay pilgrims from the Gaelic world sojourned to Rome earlier than this. The sequence starts with a Scottish chronicle, recording the departure for Rome of Leót and Sluagadach around 970. These were probably eastern Scottish noblemen, although they may have been churchmen. Ecclesiastical pilgrims are noted as dying in Rome even earlier, in the 920s.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Gwynn also misjudges the terminus of these annal entries, as there is a royal pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1080, rather vitiating his theory that the Norman conquest of England put a stop to such journeys.<sup>16</sup> Significantly, the annals seem to note secular figures making pilgrimages. Churchmen making the journey to Rome may thus not have been terribly unusual, and the annals rarely remark on them (though cf. AI 1036.7, which is, nonetheless, not in itself a notice of a journey). There are also Irish churchmen present as abbots of continental monasteries and hostelries; most notably Eogan 'head of the monks of the Gael in Rome' who died, perhaps in Ireland, in 1095.<sup>17</sup> Pilgrims during this period did not just journey to Rome: note Domnall Déissech (AI 1060.5), who 'went everywhere Christ went

<sup>12</sup> A. Gwynn, 'Ireland and the Continent in the Eleventh Century', *Irish Historical Studies*, 8 (1953), 193–216; reprinted in: *The Irish Church in the 11th and 12th Centuries*, ed. G. O'Brien, Dublin 1992, 34–49, the version I have used, at pp. 35–37; K. Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, London 1966, 253–56; *eadem*, *Early Christian Ireland. An Introduction to the Sources*, Ithaca (NY) 1972, 277–78.

<sup>13</sup> See C. Etchingam, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century. A Reconsideration of the Annals*, Maynooth 1996, for a good illustration of the perils of Irish chroniclers and shifting foci.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Gwynn, 'Ireland and the Continent', 36–37; *idem*, 'The Origins of the See of Dublin', in: *The Irish Church*, 50–67, at 64–67; for Cnut in Rome, and the problem of dates, see M. K. Lawson, *Cnut. The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, London and New York 1993, 102–04.

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, *The Church*, 228–29.

<sup>16</sup> Gwynn, 'Ireland and the Continent', 37–38; AI 1080.3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 38; AI 1095.13.

on earth', and the king of the Déissi who went to Jerusalem (*AI* 1080.3).

Seen thus in the eleventh-century context of fairly frequent pilgrimages to Rome and the East, many of the items in our poem make sense. The addressee of the poem has also visited Jerusalem (Golgotha, Mount Sion) and the Jordan, has visited the 'houses of the Greeks', perhaps as a way-stage along the Mediterranean, where 'the isle of the Saviour' is located, according to another text, the twelfth-century *Life of Saint Serf*. That text gives its protagonist (in reality bishop of Culross in eastern Scotland, some time in the early Middle Ages) a marvellously oriental parentage and early life: born to the king of the Canaanites, baptized in Alexandria, he was successively bishop of Alexandria, Jerusalem and then Rome, before departing for Scotland. En route from Constantinople to Rome: 'he came to the land and island of the Salvator (*insula Salvatoris*); it is called the island of Salvator because for us our Saviour came very near to it.'<sup>18</sup>

The addressee of the poem has visited Rome, and also Tours (perhaps on the journey there and back). He has also visited one very mythical place, Taprofâne, usually identified with Sri Lanka, though here perhaps simply meaning 'the utmost East'. This would have been known to the Irish from Ovid perhaps; certainly the tenth- and eleventh-century Irish translations of the texts of the Alexander legend (*Scél Alexander*) and of the destruction of Troy (*Togail Troí*) include references to it. This 'exotic' literary material may also have contained the image of the pillar-tree of the sun, as Meyer and Oskamp both note.<sup>19</sup>

Has the author of the poem, then, simply cast Brendan in the role of a contemporary pilgrim, allowing him to journey to mythical

<sup>18</sup> Alan Macquarrie, 'Vita Sancti Servani. The Life of St Serf', *Innes Review*, 44 (1993), 113–52, references at pp. 138, 146. This brings us no closer to identifying it, but does make its Mediterranean location clearer. Could it be Patmos, the island where John had his revelation? This *Life* also makes reference (pp. 139, 146) to Serf's struggles in a 'Valley of Beasts' (*ad uallem qui dicitur Nigra, siue uallis Bestiarum*), somewhere in the Alps, which may be compared with our text's *Glend na Leoman*.

<sup>19</sup> Meyer, 'Gedicht', 442–43; Oskamp, 'Mochen, mochen', 94; Meyer notes some Middle Irish texts in which the name has been reanalysed as *Tipra Fâne* 'Well of the Dawn'; for forms and citations see Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, compact ed. 1983, p. 578, col. 72.27. On the classical tradition of Taprobanê, see D. P. M. Weerakkody, *Taprobanê. Ancient Sri Lanka as known to Greeks and Romans*, Turnhout 1997.

oriental locations, but otherwise confining him to the known itineraries of the day? It is difficult to think what the motivation for this would be, were we to think of this as meant to contribute to or reform the mainstream Brendan material. The tale of Brendan is, like other voyage tales, at least partly one of wonder. If the protagonist's journey has been only to those places other contemporaries had visited it rather loses its punch. It would also be difficult to square with tradition—apart from stanzas 2 and 3, there is nothing here which resonates with the Brendan voyage legend at all. Indeed, it could not be conclusively shown that the author knew the *Navigatio*, except in a general way, though he clearly knew some version of the *Life*.

I propose instead a radically different approach to the poem, based on its literary form. Praise poems to saints in Irish are not rare,<sup>20</sup> but almost always the address to the saint is by way of importuning him or her for help or intercession. The sort of praise we have here is uncommon, though it is not unlike the sort of praise for contemporary patrons common in the Classical Irish period and indeed before. If it is not taken from a narrative of Brendan—and as we have seen we have no such narrative in which it would be appropriate—my suggestion is that the address to Brendan is in fact a conceit. The fiction, then, is not the journey, but the label 'Brendan'. A real eleventh-century person, the subject (and patron?) of the poem, is being addressed as, if you will, 'another Brendan', because he either has fared forth as a pilgrim like Brendan, or perhaps because he is about to set out. Hence, the itinerary is not marvellous, but rather, despite its occasional exoticism, eminently feasible for a contemporary pilgrim.

If this were the case, to whom might it be addressed? Several possibilities come to mind. An abbot of eleventh-century Clonfert would be an obvious suggestion. The abbot of his monastery would be *comarba* (*heres*) *Brénainn*, his successor or heir in every respect. A pilgrim abbot from Clonfert would thus suit the poem well. There are, however, no notices of pilgrim abbots of Clonfert to Rome and points

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<sup>20</sup> For example, the poem to St Barre, K. Meyer, *Bruchstücke der älteren Lyrik Irlands*, Berlin 1919, 23–24; for discussion of poems to Columba, see T. O. Clancy, 'Columba, Adomnán and the Cult of Saints in Scotland', in D. Broun and T. O. Clancy, ed., *Spes Scotorum, Hope of Scots. Saint Columba, Iona and Scotland*, Edinburgh 1999, 3–34.



beyond in the annals I have examined. This is despite the fact that the *Annals of Innisfallen* pay very close attention to Clonfert, and indeed to the wider community of Brendan (including the monastery of Ardfert), and the deeds of the saint's powers against his transgressors, especially during the period 1020 × 1080.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the eye is drawn to the fourth entry for 1026 in the *Annals of Innisfallen*, the pilgrimage of Máel Rúanaid úa Maíl Doraid, King of Cenél Conaill (in modern Co Donegal), also noted in *AU*. The three stages of the journey mentioned in the annal entry (Clonfert—Iona—Rome) are all mentioned in our poem. We should also note that the poem's addressee is called *rí ruirech* 'king of over-kings', in line 8c. While saints are occasionally termed *rí* 'king', in poetry about them, perhaps drawing on the extended meaning of Latin *princeps* in its ecclesiastical usage, *rí ruirech* is striking, precise, and unique.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Máel Rúanaid seems to have been thought by some, including the compilers of the *Annals of Innisfallen*, as having been a *rí ruirech*. He is called *Rí in Tuascirt* 'King of the North' in *AI* 1026.4, and according to *AI* 1033.15, his successor and kinsman Domnall Ua Maíl Doraid held both Cenél Conaill and Cenél nEógain at his death. The next year, we are told that Flaithbertach Ua Néill, another pilgrim to Rome, 'took Ailech back', which implies he had lost it for a time. Máel Rúanaid's title in the 1026 entry may well imply that he then held Ailech, the symbolic royal site of Cenél nEógain, but also generally of the 'kingship of the North'.

In this context, the reference in the poem to Ailech (8d) is interesting. Usually this is assumed to be the monastery in Britain said

<sup>21</sup> This aspect of *AI* would repay closer examination, both in terms of the sources of *AI*, and also the ecclesiastical history of eleventh-century Ireland. The connection between Brendan's monasteries and a strand or strands of entries in *AI* has been discussed in K. Grabowski and D. Dumville, *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales. The Clonmacnoise-group Texts*, Woodbridge 1984, 19–26, 88–93. Note in particular the poem related to Brendan in the margins of the current first folio of *AI*, discussed p. 91. I am grateful to Nicholas Evans for drawing these references to my attention.

<sup>22</sup> For an example of a saint addressed as *rí*, see G. Mac Eoin, 'The Lament for Cuimíne Fota', *Ériu*, 28 (1977), 17–31, verse 6: *sech ba h-epscoip-som, ba rí, / be mac-thigern Mo Chummi*; for discussion of the term, see T. O. Clancy, 'Saint and Fool. The Image and Function of Cumíne Fota and Comgán Mac Da Chierda in Early Irish Literature', Unpub. PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992, 81–82. For the meaning of *rí ruirech*, see F. Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Dublin 1988, 17–18.

to be founded by Brendan in the *Vita*.<sup>23</sup> This has often been identified with Eileach an Naomh, an island which lies between Mull and the west coast mainland of Scotland.<sup>24</sup> Whilst Adomnán's *Vita sancti Columbae* mentions Brendan visiting Columba in Iona, the *Vita Brendani* gives no clear indication for thinking of Ailech as being in Scotland, although another monastery, *Bledua*, is clearly meant to be on Tiree. We could take vs. 8 as referring to Brendan's time spent in Scotland, and Adomnán tells of Brendan's visits to Iona, but nothing in the *Lives of Brendan* suggest this. I would also add that the allusive reference to Ailech, if it refers to the monastery in the *Vita*, is quite separated in the poem from the much more obvious material from the *Vita* in vss 2–3.

Perhaps we might suggest that, despite the existence of a tradition of Brendan founding a monastery called Ailech, what is meant in vs. 8 is in fact the royal site of the Cenél nEógain at Ailech? If this were the case, this verse would read like an itinerary proper, east—west, perhaps a homecoming itinerary: to Rome, to Tours, to Iona, to Ailech. That it is the subject's 'due' to stay at both Iona and Ailech would, in the context I am suggesting, sit well with the idea of a Cenél Conaill king and overking of the North; Cenél Conaill's links with Iona and the Columban *familia* in general have been well developed by Máire Herbert, who has shown that they were being forged anew in the eleventh century.<sup>25</sup>

If, however, it were addressed to Máel Rúanaid, it must have been before he set off, as the annals record his death on pilgrimage. It should also be noted that we could try to combine both the two ideas that it was for a pilgrim abbot of Clonfert and that it was related to the journey of Máel Rúanaid in 1026. After all, the king first went on his pilgrimage to Clonfert before proceeding on to Iona and Rome. Could the abbot of Clonfert at the time—presumably Oengus ua Flaind who died in 1036 (*AI* 1036.5), have accompanied him? This is mere speculation, but far from impossible. Bolstering the royal reference, however, is the final verse, where the addressee

<sup>23</sup> *Salmanticensis, Vita altera*, § 15; C. Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae. Partim hactenus ineditae ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum recognovit prolegomenis notis indicibus instruxit*, 2 vols, Oxford 1910, repr. Dublin 1968, here *Vita* 1, § lxxxvi [86], pp. 56–78.

<sup>24</sup> For example, in I. B. Cowan and D. E. Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses. Scotland*, 2nd ed., London 1976, 48.

<sup>25</sup> Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry. The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*, Dublin 1996, 88–97.

is said to prefer journeying in his boat to drinking mead and feasting. While this could be addressed to a noble abbot, it seems much more like the imagery of secular penitence, familiar from a poem attributed to the king-bishop Cormac mac Cuilennáin, in which he debates whether to leave behind feasting and featherbeds and journey instead in hardship on the sea.<sup>26</sup> It is possible, finally, to suggest that we may sit lightly on the links with 1026 and thus still be persuaded that the poem is addressed to a king. If Ailech is the Irish royal site, perhaps the other well-known royal pilgrim, Flaithbertach Ua Néill, is himself a candidate?

It remains to ask what the significance of this analysis is for the Brendan legend in general. For one thing, whatever its origins or purpose, it represents active literary inventiveness with respect to the saint. The poet does not certainly know the *Navigatio*, but seems to know Brendan's reputation as pilgrim and voyager. It is not, however, as Oskamp suggested, a repackaging of Brendan for the incredulous. Rather, it would appear to be a deft poetic conceit which sits best in the eleventh-century context of pilgrimage to Europe and beyond.

However, the poem does intersect with the *Vita* and related vernacular *Lives* in two or three places. The *Vita* contains a story involving Brendan's visit to Gildas's monastery (for penance, in one version) and his being offered authority over it as a result of his great holiness. This sequence also contains the episode of the Lions' Glen, in which Brendan survives, like Daniel, a time in the fearsome place.<sup>27</sup> In the same 'British' section, and less convincingly, the *Vita* describes Brendan founding a monastery called Ailech.<sup>28</sup> It has been pointed out that this section could also relate to Brittany, and that is certainly the location of the most prominent monasteries connected to Gildas in the eleventh century.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See P. L. Henry, *The Early English and Celtic Lyric*, London 1966, 53–63, esp. v. 3.

<sup>27</sup> W. W. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi*, Brussel 1965 (Subsidia Hagiographica, 28), 'Vita altera', 324–31, here § 14; Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, 'Vita Prima', §§ lxxxiii–lxxxv; Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn*, 'Betha Brenainn', §§ 166–74.

<sup>28</sup> Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 'Vita altera', § 15; Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, 'Vita Prima', § lxxxvi; Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉrenn*, 'Betha Brenainn', § 175.

<sup>29</sup> By way of offering readers yet a third interpretation of this poem, one could suggest a connection between the monastery Ailech and Alet in Brittany (for which

However, it is only with episodes from the British section that the poem intersects. There are no references to anything hinting at the rest of the material in the *Vita* tradition. This raises some interesting questions. Does the poem represent knowledge of the ‘British section’ of the *Vita* as a separate entity? If so, it is an important clue to the construction of this portion of the *Vita*, which seems to me inorganic in several respects, particularly its structural placement in all but the Salmanticensis *Vita*. These matters, however, must await a fuller analysis of the transmission of the *Vita* as a whole, and not just those sections that relate to the *Navigatio*.

There is also potentially some linguistic overlap between the Gildas scene and our poem. *Betha Brénainn* persistently refers to Gildas’s monastery as a *cathrach*, and although this is a fairly common word for a monastery, it also uses the word *cumus* in relation to the ‘authority’ over his monastery that Gildas offers him.<sup>30</sup> These are the words used in line 2d of our poem.

I would advance two suggestions. First, an unlikely one: the British episodes might be inspired by the poem, rather than the other way round. If Ailech referred in the poem to Ailech in Cenél nEógain, which was understood by a hagiographer as another monastery, could a new place have been invented as a result? Could misunderstanding of what the poem says about Gildas’s monastery have created the series of episodes set in this place? After all, Gildas’s monastery of Ruis in Brittany could also have been a natural stopping-off point for a pilgrim on his way to Tours, Rome and beyond. The twelfth-century Scottish *Life of Saint Serf* mentions a ‘Valley of the Beasts’ in the Alps where that saint, like the subject of our poem, has survived many struggles. That said, this suggestion runs into the converse of the above problems: the *Vita* certainly knows nothing about the other destinations claimed for Brendan in the poem—but then most versions of the *Vita* had a version of the *Navigatio* to work with, one which would readily contradict the material in the poem.

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see e.g., S. Mac Mathúna, ‘Contributions’, 162–63), and this could suggest that there is a Breton background. Note that the bishop of Alet at the time was Bishop Salvator (cf. vs. 7)! The first verse of our poem refers to *Letha*, which can mean Brittany. But I do not think such a reading would be very robust, especially as the poem is in Middle Irish. Most people have also rejected Brittany as the location for the sections of the *Vita* set in *Britannia*.

<sup>30</sup> Noted also by Meyer, ‘Gedicht’, 441.

Hence, my second suggestion. Whilst aware of the Brendan traditions contained in the 'British' section of the *Life*, the poet here uses them as part of his conceit, aware that the real monastery of Gildas at Ruis was on the pilgrim route, aware that there were traditions of frightful glens on the pilgrims' route through the Alps. Likewise, aware of the tradition that Brendan founded a church on an island called Ailech, this reference is made multivalent by the royal status of the addressee of the poem. In short, whilst there are signs of the poet's knowledge of some parts of the *Life*, his deployment of them is subordinated to his overall conceit of an Irish pilgrim to eastern lands as 'another Brendan'.

Whatever the precise relationship of the poem and the *Life*, then, I would restate the hypothesis that in *Mochen*, *mochen*, a *Brénaind* we have a poem addressed to a real eleventh-century pilgrim from Ireland to Europe and beyond. The poem imagines an itinerary first west-east and then east-west: first acknowledging his subject as lord of Clonfert, then noting a monastery of Gildas (perhaps one in Brittany, and a way-stage on the pilgrimage), and a 'Lion's Glen' (perhaps the same as a valley in the Alps noted in another saint's *Life*). From there the poet takes the subject to the utmost East, to Taprobanê and the river Jordan, then he lingers in the Holy Land at Golgotha and Mount Sion, before journeying home through the lands of the Greeks and the island in the Mediterranean called *insula Salvatoris*. Thence to Rome and Tours, and Iona, and then finally back to Ireland, to Ailech. The references to the subject being a 'king of overkings', and his rejection of feasting and wines, suggests that, despite the hagiographical conceit, the subject is one of the many secular noblemen who journeyed thus from Ireland during this period.

One final note is that the context of lay pilgrimage impinges also on the second voyage sequence in the *Vita*, where the pilgrims include lay people instead of just monks. As I have suggested elsewhere, this too is a radical change in outlook for the Brendan legend.<sup>31</sup> When sinful lay people also go on this voyage, and are redeemed, we have reached a new stage in our understanding of what Brendan and his voyages were about, a stage very like that of the Irish church in the eleventh century.

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<sup>31</sup> T. O. Clancy, 'Subversion at Sea: Structure, Style and Intent in the *Immrama*', in: Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage*, 194–225.

## APPENDIX 1

*MOCHEN, MOCHEN A BRÉNAIND*

from the *Book of Leinster* [L], p. 366 and p. 369 marg.; *Book of Uí Mhaine* [M], f. 109v.

This constitutes an ‘edition of editions’, rather than a fresh edition and is here for ease of reference. It does not replace Oskamp or Ó Riain (or for that matter Meyer, who has much to say not covered here), though it differs from both on occasion, mostly in terms of interpretation, and makes some new suggestions. I have silently supplied length-marks, and for orthographic ease expanded lenited *f* (with dot) as /fh/, lenited /s/ as /sh/. L forms the basis of the edition, and minor orthographical differences from it (e.g. L’s *mochen* v. M’s *mochean*, 1a) have generally not been noted; Oskamp supplies these, for the curious. Material in square brackets is legible only in M. Brackets indicate emendation. For previous editions, see n. 3, above.

**1. Mochen, mochen, a Brénaind,  
a breó rochloss co lIetha;  
mochen, a chomsid Clúana,  
dia fognat<sup>a</sup> búada in betha**

<sup>a</sup>*fognaid* M

‘Welcome, welcome, Brendan, | flame who is famed as far as Latium; | welcome, lord of Clon[fert], | whom the fortunes of the world serve.’

Notes: *Lethae* can also mean ‘Brittany’, and by association ‘Europe’. The context seems to demand Rome.

**2. Mochen ocus morochen,  
a meic Fhindloga [fhindais]<sup>a</sup>,  
as rathmar dait cach ndo{nu}s<sup>b</sup>,  
latt commus cathrach Gillaiss.**

<sup>a</sup>*thus* M    <sup>b</sup>*ndoinmis* L; *nonnais* M

‘Welcome and very welcome, | son of ?white-shoed Findlug, | every ?misfortune is fortunate for you, | the control of Gildas’s monastery is yours.’

Notes: *fhindais*: unfortunately illegible in L, but M’s reading renders Meyer’s *findchais* unnecessary. Oskamp took this as ‘fair stripling’, cf. *ás* ‘growth, shoot’, and hence read *Gillaiss* for rhyme, but *as* ‘shoe, slipper’, while odd, is also possible.

*do{nu}s*: Oskamp’s suggestion ‘misfortune, calamity’ lies plausibly behind both the MS readings, which must be mistakes.

For Gildas's monastery, perhaps one in Brittany, though the *Lives* seem to place it in Britain, cf. *VB* (e.g. Plummer, *BNÉ*, 'Betha Brenainn', § lv; *idem*, *VSH*, 'Vita Prima', §§ lxxxiii–lxxxv).

**3. Dochúad co Glend na Leóman,  
fúar mór tend sech cech n-ér{*l*}am<sup>a</sup>,  
fota úad ata [*?m'*ítto  
im do<sup>b</sup>] thíchtu<sup>c</sup>, im do thérnam.**

<sup>a</sup>erdam L; eram M <sup>b</sup>thus M c thus L; thichto M

'You have gone to the Lions' Glen, | you have found great hardship, more than every patron saint. | Far from it is my desire, | with regard to your coming and your going.'

Notes: the Lions' Glen: cf. Plummer, *BNÉ*, 'Betha Brenainn' § lv; *VSH*, 'Vita Prima' § lxxxv.

*er{l}am*: M's *eram* is opaque, but although L's *erdam* 'porch, vestibule' is possible, it is hard to extract meaning from it. The emendation is Meyer's, accepted by Oskamp. *m'ítto*: the reading *mittu* is supplied by Ó Riain; Oskamp tentatively read *mito*. The *-tt-* is clear, but the letter seems too rounded for Ó Riain's *-u*. Neither suggested a meaning. I suggest *ítto* 'thirst, desire' and we should probably emend thus, for rhyme with L's *thichtu*, taking the *m* as the *ls* poss. pn.

**4. I tír thall Taprofáne,  
dianid áge crand gréne,  
ic Iordanán co n-úare,  
ropsat deoradán Féne.**

'In the land of Taprobanê over there, | where the tree of the sun is a post, | at the chilly Jordan, | you were a pilgrim of the Irish.'

Notes: For the references in 4ab, see text above.

**5. Ro fhégais fhót [in crochda,  
ce] {théig}<sup>a</sup> nimthá do shechna,  
dar shliab Sión roscuchtha  
do thraigthe luchra lethna.**

<sup>a</sup>tech L, thogh M

'You have seen the sod of the crucifixion, | (though you go, I cannot avoid you) | across Mount Sion have been moved | your bright broad feet.'

Notes: {*théig*}: my emendation of L. Oskamp was uncertain. I take it as the 2s pres. of *téit*, though M may represent a form of *do-goa*, later *togaid* 'chooses'. For the idiom

of the sod, which one cannot avoid, see M. Carney, ‘Fót báis/banapufa’, *Arv: tidskrift för nordisk folkinnesforskning.*, 13 (1957), 173–79.

*Síon*: Meyer, 441–42 notes the presence of Mount Sion in the *Reise*.

**6. Dar lár slébe da fhresdul,  
rí gréne glaine coscor<sup>a</sup>  
[as tú ro an fri] apstail,  
aithle th’astair iar troscud.**

<sup>a</sup>glain co san[. . .] L; glaine coscor M

‘Across the ground of the mountain to meet | the king of the sun—clarity of triumphs—| you have stayed with apostles, | after your long journeys, after fasting.’

*Notes*: *glaine coscor*. This reading of M’s is not very satisfying, and leaves L unexplained.

**7. I trebaib Gréc ro gabais,  
{díb}<sup>a</sup> feraib déc dochúadais<sup>b</sup>  
is mór n-insi ro fhégais  
im Insi S[alutóiris]**

<sup>a</sup>ab feraib L; tri M <sup>b</sup>read *dochóidís* for rhyme

‘In the dwellings of the Greeks you have stayed, | you have come with twelve [thirteen M] men | many the islands you have seen, | around [or including] the Isle of the Saviour.’

**8. Do Róim romilis romuich,  
do Thorinis fot ainiuch;  
duthaig dait, a rí ruirech,  
{t’fh}uirech<sup>a</sup> ic hÍ is ic Ailiuch.**

<sup>a</sup>tuirech, L, M

‘To Rome, very pleasant, very gloomy, | to Tours (which is?) under your protection; | your heritage/customary for you, king of overkings, | your staying at Iona and at Ailech.’

*Notes*: {t’fh}uirech. As Meyer notes, *tuirech* is not an impossible reading, but Oskamp’s emendation makes good sense and is accepted here.



**9. Áillge deit indá midól,  
ocus fáilte fri fledól,  
tú it luing ó ailen d'aileón,  
rom chrideón is mochenón.**

‘More pleasing to you than mead-drinking | and than joy whilst carousing, | you in your boat from island to island, | by my heart, and welcome!’

## APPENDIX 2

## SOME TENTH- AND ELEVENTH-CENTURY NOTICES OF GAELIC PILGRIMS

*Sources:*

AFM = *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, ed. J. O'Donovan, Dublin 1856.

AI = *The Annals of Innisfallen*, ed. S. Mac Airt, Dublin 1944, repr. 1988.

AT = 'The Annals of Tigernach', ed. W. Stokes, *Revue celtique*, 17 (1896), 119–263, repr. Felinfach 1990.

AU = *The Annals of Ulster, to A.D. 1113*, ed. S. Mac Airt and G. MacNiocaill, Dublin 1983.

CKA = *The Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*, ed. M. O. Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, 2nd ed. 1980.

CS = *Chronicum Scotorum. A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135, with a supplement, containing the events from 1141 to 1150*, ed. W. M. Hennessy, London 1866 (Rolls Series).

Marianus Scottus, *Chronicle*: edited in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, vol. 5, Hannover 1844, 481–564.

CKA [c. 970] *Leot et Sluagadach exierunt ad Romam*.

AU 975.2 *Domnall m. Eogain, i n-ailithri* [. . .] 'Domnall son of Eogan, king of the Britons, on pilgrimage.'

*Brut y Tywysogion* '[. . .] Dunguallaun king of Strathclyde, went to Rome'.

AI 1026.4 *Moel Ruanaid Hua Maíl Doraid, ri in tuascirt, ina ailithre co Cluain Ferta Brenainn, co ndeochaid as side co Húi Coluim Cille, as side co Róim Letha*. 'Máel Rúanaid Ua Maíl Doraid, king of the North, on his pilgrimage to Clonfert of Brendan, and proceeded from there to Iona, and thence to Rome' [cf. AU 1026.5].

CS [1027] *Maolbrúanaidh .h. Maoldoraidh dh'éc i n-ailitre*

'Máel Rúanaid ua Maíl Doraid died on pilgrimage'.

AU 1028.7 *Sitriuc m. m. Amlaib, ri Gall, 7 Flannacan H. Ceallaig, ri Breg, a ndul do Roim*.

'Sitriuc grandson of Amlaib [Cuarán], king of the Foreigners [of Dublin], and Flannacán grandson of Cellach, king of Brega, went to Rome.'

AI 1028.5 *Macc Amlaib ina ailithre do Róim* 'The son of Amlaib on his pilgrimage to Rome'.

AU 1030.4 *Flaithbertach H. Neill do dhul do Roim* 'Flaithbertach Ua Néill went to Rome'.

AU 1031.1 *Flaithbertach H. Neill do thiachtain o Roim* 'Flaithbertach [. . .] returned from Rome'.

AU 1034.2 *Amlaim m. Sitriuc do marbad do Saxanaibh oc dul do Roim.*

‘Amlaíb son of Sitriuc was killed by Saxons whilst going to Rome’

AI 1036.7 *Cellach Hua Selbaich, comarba Barre 7 ailithir Róma 7 primánchara Herend, quieuít in Christo.*

‘Cellach, grandson of Selbach, successor of St Barre, and pilgrim of Rome and chief anchorite of Ireland, rested in Christ.’

AI 1042.5 *Hua Domnaill Dub da Buirend ina ailithre do Róim.*

‘Ua Domnaill, Dub Da Bairend, on his pilgrimage to Rome’

1050 [Marianus Scottus, Chronicle] *Rex Scottiae Macbethad Romae argentum pauperibus seminando distribuit.*

‘The king of Scotland, MacBethad, scattered money like seed to the poor, at Rome.’

AU 1051.4 *Laidhgnen m. Maelain, ri Gaileng, cum sua regina, .i. ingen In Gut, do dul dia ailithri do Roim, 7 a ec.*

‘Laidcnén son of Maelán, king of Gailenga, with his queen, i.e., the daughter of *In Got* (‘the Stammerer’), went on his pilgrimage to Rome, and he died.’ [cf. *AFM co n-erbaltattar thoir oc tiachtain on Róimh* ‘and they died in the east on their way back from Rome’]

AI 1060.5 *Domnall Déssech, cenn crabuid 7 dércé na nGoedel, 7 is he ro imthig do neoch imdeochaid Crist i talmáin, quieuít in Domino hi Tich Munnu.*

‘Domnall Déissech, the chief of devotion and piety of the Gaels, and it is he who went to everywhere Christ went on earth, rested in the Lord at Tech Munnu.’

AI 1064.5 + *Donnchad mc. Briain do dul do Róim* ‘Donnchad son of Brian went to Rome’.

AU 1064.4 *Donnchad m. Briain airdri Muman do athrigadh 7 do ec i Roim ina ailithri.*

‘Donnchad [. . .], high-king of Munster was deposed, and died in Rome on his pilgrimage.’

[AT = *a mainsitir Sdefain*, ‘in Stephen’s monastery’—?Santo Stefano Rotundo?]

Marianus Scottus: *Donnchad filius Briain rex de Hibernia atque Echmarcach rex inna Renn* [= the Rhinns of Galloway] *uiri inter suos non ignobiles, Romam uenientes obierunt*

AI 1080.3 *Hua Cind Fhaelad, rí na nDése, do dul (do) Hierusalem.*

Ua Cinn Fhaelad, King of the Déissi, went to Jerusalem.

AI 1095.13 [. . .] *Eogan, cend manach na Gaedel hi Roim* ‘Eogan, head of the Gaelic monks in Rome’ [in entry on great mortality of 1095].

*Some other relevant annals*

*AI 1033.15 Domnall Hua Muil Doraid, rí Cenéóil Eogain 7 Chonaill, do marbad.*  
 ‘Domnall Ua Maíl Doraid, king of Cenél nEogain and Cenél Conaill, was killed.’

*AI 1034.8 Flaithbertach Hua Neill do gabail Ailich dorithise 7 a riarugud do thuasciurt Herend ar shinserecht*  
 ‘Flaithbertach Ua Néill took back Ailech, and the north of Ireland submitted to him on account of seniority.’

*AI 1036.5 Oengus Hua Flaind, comarba Brenainn Cluana Ferta, quieuít*  
 ‘Oengus, grandson of Flann, successor of Brendan of Clonfert, died.’

## ORIENTAL EREMITICAL MOTIFS IN THE *NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI*

Anna Maria Fagnoni

Situated at the intersection of several Latin and Irish genres, sources and traditions, which are cleverly combined and refashioned, the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* (*NB*)<sup>1</sup> is nonetheless a narrative not lacking in original features. It follows various, often unrelated tendencies, which may be roughly connected to two main streams: on the one hand, a taste for adventure, curiosity for the unknown and a desire to overcome difficult or dangerous circumstances, on the other hand, the practice of monastic life and the ideal of asceticism. This combination of tendencies provides the text with its typical tone, at once fabulous and edifying.

Whereas the first stream is to be linked, in a strictly structural sense, to Old Irish literature (*immrama* and *echtrae*) and also, owing to a number of isolated episodes, to Latin narrative traditions relating to worldly or otherworldly journeys,<sup>2</sup> the second stream closely reflects the atmosphere of the monastic milieu to which the author belonged, and accordingly its distinctive form of culture, with its traditional output of ascetic-spiritual and hagiographical texts. The latter genre, so far less thoroughly explored in connection with the *Navigatio*, is the object of my present research, limited, however, to works pertaining to oriental monasticism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I quote the *Navigatio* (*NB*) according to the provisional text of G. Orlandi's edition, in preparation for the series *Per verba* (SISMEL—Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze), from which I adopt chapter and paragraph numbers; I add in square brackets the numbering of lines in the edition by C. Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Ind.) 1959, repr. Blackrock (Co. Dublin) 1989. Chapter numbers coincide in both editions.

<sup>2</sup> I refer to the *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, to apocryphal texts such as the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud Anthropophagos* or the *Vita Adae et Evae*, to the *Visiones*, to profane texts of the kind belonging to the cycle of Alexander the Great, etc. The results of detailed research into models and sources of the *Navigatio* are summarised in: I. [= G.] Orlandi, *Navigatio sancti Brendani*. 1. *Introduzione*, Milano and Varese 1968 (Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità, 38).

<sup>3</sup> On the beginnings and early developments of oriental monasticism, see D. J. Chitty, *The Desert a City*, Oxford 1977; French transl. by the monks of Quevey: *Et*

It is not only in respect of its spirit of adventure, but also in its specifically religious interests that the *Navigatio* (*NB*) is full of motifs, themes, literary *topoi*, images and symbols, of which numerous precedents may easily be found in earlier texts. It is generally rather difficult, however, to decide whether we are dealing with mere coincidences or whether the elements in common really allow us to hypothesise some form of relationship.

As a basis for comparison with our narrative, I have chosen a group of texts (nearly all pertaining to the genre of the *Vitae patrum*), which were written, or more often translated, in Latin, for the most part in late antiquity, and which generally enjoyed a wide circulation on the Continent. They sometimes left traces in Ireland itself and are therefore works potentially known by our author.

Among the texts taken into account, I have examined the following in detail: Athanasius's *Vita Antonii* (*VA*), according to Evagrius of Antioch's translation;<sup>4</sup> Hieronymus's *Vita Pauli* (*VP*),<sup>5</sup> *Vita Malchi*<sup>6</sup> and *Vita Hilarionis* (*VH*);<sup>7</sup> books 5–7 of the *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), translated respectively by the Roman deacon Pelagius,<sup>8</sup> by the Roman subdeacon John<sup>9</sup> and by Paschasius of Dumius;<sup>10</sup> the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* (*HM*), according to Rufinus's translation;<sup>11</sup>

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*le désert devint une cité...* Une introduction à l'étude du monachisme égyptien et palestinien dans l'Empire chrétien, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Begrolles-en-Mauges 1980 (Spiritualité orientale, 31). For the lasting influence of the earliest monasticism in the Middle Ages, see G. Penco, 'Il ricordo dell'ascetismo orientale nella tradizione monastica del Medioevo europeo', *Studi Medievali*, ser. 3a, 4 (1963), 571–87.

<sup>4</sup> PL 73, 125–69 (*BHL* 609). I have also considered the first, anonymous, Latin translation (*BHL Suppl.* 609e), although it had been (so it seems) scarcely circulated; edited in *Vita di Antonio*, intr. C. Mohrmann, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, transl. P. Citati and S. Lilla, [Milano] 1974, 3rd ed. 1981 (*Vite dei santi dal III al VI secolo*, 1).

<sup>5</sup> PL 23, 17–28 (*BHL* 6596).

<sup>6</sup> PL 23, 53–60 (*BHL* 5190).

<sup>7</sup> PL 23, 29–53 (*BHL* 3879). New edition, with facing Italian transl., in: *Vita di Martino, Vita di Ilarione, In memoria di Paola*, ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen and J. W. Smit, [Milano] 1975, 2nd ed. 1983 (*Vite dei santi dal III al VI secolo*, 4), 69–143. There are other Italian translations of Jerome's hagiographical works, with useful introductions: San Girolamo, *Vite di Paolo, Ilarione e Malco*, ed. G. Lanata, Milano 1975; Girolamo, *Vite degli eremiti Paolo, Ilarione e Malco*, ed. B. Degórski, Roma 1996.

<sup>8</sup> PL 73, 855–988 (*BHL* 6527).

<sup>9</sup> PL 73, 993–1022 (*BHL* 6529).

<sup>10</sup> PL 73, 1025–62 (*BHL* 6531). New edition: *A versão latina por Pascásio de Dume dos 'Apophthegmata patrum'*, ed. J. G. Freire, 2 vols, Coimbra 1971, vol. 1, 157–333.

<sup>11</sup> PL 21, 387–462 (*BHL* 6524). New edition: Tyrannius Rufinus, *Historia monachorum sive de vita sanctorum Patrum*, ed. E. Schulz-Flügel, Berlin and New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 34).

Palladius's *Historia Lausiaca* (HL);<sup>12</sup> John Cassianus's *Institutiones*<sup>13</sup> and *Conlationes*;<sup>14</sup> the anonymous *Vita Macharii Romani* (VMR),<sup>15</sup> *Vita Onuphrii* (VO),<sup>16</sup> *Vita Mariae Aegyptiacae* (VMAe),<sup>17</sup> *Vita Pelagiae*,<sup>18</sup> *Vita Marinae*,<sup>19</sup> *Vita Thaidis*,<sup>20</sup> and *Vita Abrahae et Mariae neptis eius*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> PL 74, 243–342 (BHL 6532).

<sup>13</sup> Jean Cassien, *Institutions cénobitiques*, ed. J.-Cl. Guy, Paris 1965 (Sources chrétiennes, 109).

<sup>14</sup> Iohannes Cassianus, *Conlationes XXIV*, ed. M. Petschenig, Vindobonae [Wien] 1886 (CSEL, 13). The text established by Petschenig is reproduced, with some omissions, in Jean Cassien, *Conférences*, ed. E. Pichery, 3 vols, Paris 1955, 1958, 1959 (Sources chrétiennes, 42, 54, 64). To the *errata corrige* in Sources chrétiennes, 64, p. 246, one has to add Giovanni Cassiano, *Abba, cos'è la preghiera? Conferenze sulla preghiera*, transl. and comm. M. Degli Innocenti, Magnano (Biella) 2000 (Padri occidentali), 10 n. 2.

<sup>15</sup> PL 73, 415–26 (BHL 5104). New, provisional edition by G. Bertone, *La versione latina della 'Vita Macharii Romani'*. *Studi sul testo e sulla tradizione manoscritta*, Diss. Università degli Studi di Milano 1991, 432–694. For the relationship between VMR and NB, see Orlandi, *Navigatio*. 1. *Introduzione*, 113–18.

<sup>16</sup> I use the longer recension, probably to be considered as the original one, corresponding to BHL 6334a. So far only a provisional edition is available in I. Bartoli Grecchi, *Ricerche sulla tradizione manoscritta della 'Vita' di s. Onofrio*, Diss. Università degli Studi di Milano, 1976, 45–99; I am preparing a critical edition. See in PL 73, 211–20 the recension of VO classified as BHL 6336, which corresponds to the central section of the recension BHL 6334a and whose content is only the meeting of the pilgrim Paphnutius with Onuphrius.

<sup>17</sup> PL 73, 671–90 (BHL 5415). See now a new edition (with the same chapter division) founded upon three new mss, London, BL, Cotton Claudius A.i, s. X<sup>med</sup>; Cotton Nero E.i, s. XI<sup>ex</sup>; Salisbury, Cathedral Library 221, s. XI<sup>ex</sup>: *Vita Sanctae Mariae Aegyptiacae*, ed. J. Stevenson, in: *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. E. Poppe and B. Ross, Dublin 1996, 51–79. This recension, containing Paul the Neapolitan Deacon's translation, was also circulated in the British Isles, as the aforesaid mss attest: cf. H. L. C. Tristram, 'Introduction', in: *The Legend of Mary of Egypt*, 13–14. Given the existence of a recension in Old English, the presence of VMAe in an insular milieu had been surmised by G. Orlandi, 'Temi e correnti nelle leggende di viaggio dell'Occidente alto-medievale', in: *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale. Spoleto, 23–29 aprile 1981*, 2 vols, Spoleto 1983 (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 29), 523–75, 545 and n. 64.

<sup>18</sup> PL 73, 663–72 (BHL 6605). The dossier of St Pelagia has been studied and published in the collective work *Pélagie la pénitente. Métamorphoses d'une légende*, ed. P. Petitmengin et al., vol. 1, *Les textes et leur histoire*; vol. 2, *La survie dans les littératures européennes*, Paris 1981, 1984, where the recension BHL 6605 is edited (pp. 161–79) by F. Dolbeau.

<sup>19</sup> PL 73, 691–94 (BHL 5528).

<sup>20</sup> PL 73, 661–62 (BHL 8012). The same text is also found in *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 7, ch. 57, 4 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 276–79). The *Vitae* of Mary the Egyptian, Thais and Pelagia are discussed and translated (from Latin) in B. Ward, *Harlots of the Desert. A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources*, London and Oxford 1987; Italian transl. by: T. Franzosi (English text) and C. Falchini (Latin text of the *Vitae*): *Donne del deserto*, Magnano (Biella) 1993 (Padri orientali).

<sup>21</sup> PL 73, 281–92 [= 651–60 (BHL 12)].

A thorough textual analysis has shown that the presence in the *Navigatio* of themes characterising the literature of oriental monasticism is so substantial that a drastic selection became inevitable. First of all, I shall examine a thematic complex of a general nature, remarkably rich and varied: abandonment to God. Some more specific themes will be dealt with later.

### 1. *Abandonment to God*

A fundamental attitude inspires the travellers in the *Navigatio* and pervades the whole story, giving it a particular flavour: the self-surrender to God's will. It mainly reveals itself when the journey towards the *Terra Repromissionis* and the means of survival are in question.

#### 1.1. *The Journey*

Brendan does not know the route he has to follow: it is God, 'sailor and helmsman' (*nautor et gubernator*, 6, § 3 [7]; cf. 15, § 6 [8]), that governs the boat, directing it, stage by stage, 'wherever he wants' (*ubicumque vult*, 14, § 2 [3]) and 'just as he wills' (*sicut vult*, 15, § 6 [9]; cf. 6, § 4 [9]), so that 'the boat was borne through various places on the ocean' (*per diversa loca oceani ferebatur navis*, 8, § 4 [8]). From time to time the saint orders his small crew to stop rowing and, holding the rudder, to surrender to the wind: "Ship all the oars and the rudder. Just leave the sail spread" ("Mittite intus omnes remiges et gubernam; tantum dimittite vela extensa", 6, § 4 [8–9]).<sup>22</sup> A wind gets up about which, however, they know neither whence it comes nor where it bears them: 'they did not know from what direction it [*sc.* wind] came or in what direction the boat was going' (*ignorabant ex qua parte veniebat [sc. ventus] aut in quam partem ferebatur navis*, 6, § 5 [11–12]), and the allusion, which this passage implies, to John 3: 8 'the wind blows where it wishes [. . .] but (you) cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes' (*Spiritus ubi vult spirat [. . .] sed nescis unde veniat aut quo vadat*), if consciously meant by the author, gives the wind a strong symbolic sense.

<sup>22</sup> See also: 'they [. . .] apart from holding the sail, had no need to navigate' (*nihil fuit eis opus navigare nisi tenere vela*, 6, § 2 [3]).



The Hermit Paul also tells them that, after setting sail in a boat towards an unspecified place where he was destined to live until the day of his death (cf. 26, § 32 [61–62]), he let his boat go ‘wherever the wind would drive it’ (*ubicumque ventus voluisset illam iactare*, 26, § 34 [66–67]). One recognises here the typical features of the *peregrinatio pro Christo*, which reveal several conspicuous analogies with the stories of the anchorites of the desert, though their situations differ.

The monks who follow their calling to the solitary life and wish to reach a place where they will find their final abode, or those who only temporarily embrace pilgrimage in the desert, mostly undertake their journey knowing neither the goal, the route nor the duration of their march.<sup>23</sup> Such is Anthony’s situation as he makes his way ‘towards the inner desert’ (*ad interius desertum*, *VA*, 24), and when he sets off in search of Paul of Thebes.<sup>24</sup> It is also true of the three monks who, in the *Vita Macharii Romani*, progress towards the place where ‘the sky joins the land’ (*coelum terrae se coniungit*, ch. 3), and when Macharius flees from his father’s house, and likewise with many leading figures in the *Vita Onuphrii*, with Zosima and Maria in the *Vita Mariae Aegyptiacae* and countless others. Though none of them knows where to turn, the routes they follow are never casual; indeed, they unfailingly lead them to the destination established by God. In the *Vita Onuphrii* the monk Paphnutius, after setting out from his monastery towards the desert, without any specific goal, intending to live there in a more perfect and virtuous way, is taken by Providence to Onuphrius, already approaching death, just in time to hear from him the story of his ‘life and monastic experience’ (*vita atque conversatio*) and provide for his burial. So too in the *Navigatio* Paul the Hermit cannot fail to land on the *petra* destined for him (cf. 26, § 35 [67]) and Brendan will reach the Promised Land. The three

<sup>23</sup> The scriptural model *par excellence* for this attitude is unquestionably the figure of Abraham, whom God’s vocation addresses toward an unknown country: ‘get out of your country [. . .] to a land that I will show you’ (*egredere de terra tua [. . .] in terram quam monstrabo tibi*, Gen. 12:1). The *Epistula ad Hebraeos* explicitly tells about him: ‘he went out, not knowing where he was going’ (*exiit, nesciens quo iret*, Hebr. 11:8) and calls his destination *Terra Repromissionis* (‘the Land of Promise’, Hebr. 11:9). Yet Moses too, when he leads his people through the desert, stage by stage is guided by God. He even limits the time they spend in various places through the use of clear signals (cf. Num. 9:17–23).

<sup>24</sup> [Anthony] ‘began to want to go he did not know where’ ([*Antonius*] *cepit ire velle quo nesciebat*, *VP*, 7); see also: ‘Anthony did not know where to move his steps’ (*Antonius [. . .] quo verteret gradum nesciebat*, *VP*, 9).

monks of *VMR*, after innumerable vicissitudes, also reach a place near the Terrestrial Paradise. The same is true of all the others. Indeed, if Brendan's voyage took longer than Barrind's adventure led us to believe, the saint does not betray any intolerance, fear or mistrust. His attitude does not change from the outset: 'God will do as he wishes with his servants and their ship' (*faciat Deus sicut vult de servis suis et de sua navi*, 6, § 4 [9]). Thus at the end, in the words of the young guardian of the Promised Land, Brendan is given an explanation of why he has wandered from island to island for so long: "God wanted to show you his varied secrets in the great ocean" (*Deus voluit tibi ostendere diversa sua secreta in oceano magno*", 28, § 13 [26–27]). Nothing happened by mere chance.

An interesting aspect of the experience of travel, which we cannot develop here, is the intervention of guides sent by God to help the pilgrims. This aspect, too, is well attested in both the *Navigatio* and the desert literature.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.2. *The provision of Food and Drink*

Not only does God guide his servants on their way, he also supplies them with food and drink according to various procedures. They must trust him unreservedly, for on him alone, whether they are on the ocean or in the desert, does their survival depend. Brendan adopts this attitude when he finds a table already laid, with dinner miraculously served. He exhorts his community to 'give praise to the

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<sup>25</sup> After landing on the island of the uninhabited *oppidum*, Brendan acknowledges a dog coming to meet them as a *bonus nuntius* 'a good messenger' and exhorts his companions to follow the animal (cf. *NB*, 6, §§ 14–16 [30–36]). At the end of their voyage they are led from the *insula avium* to the *insula procuratoris* and thence to the *Terra Repromissionis* by the *procurator* himself, who so foretells and explains his guide's role: "This time I shall be the companion and guide of your journey. Without me you will not be able to find the Promised Land of the Saints" (*"Ero [...] socius itineris vestri ista vice atque ductor; sine me non poteritis invenire Terram Repromissionis Sanctorum"*, *NB*, 27, § 12 [23–24]). In *VP* such a role, aimed at helping Anthony, is played by imaginary creatures (a 'hippocentaur', ch. 7; a satyr, ch. 8) and by animals (a she-wolf, ch. 9). Animals also guide the three monks of *VMR* toward Paradise (a stag, ch. 2; a dove, ch. 2; and, on the way back, two lions, ch. 23); as for Macharius, he is led to the place where he is bound to arrive, first, by the angel Raphael himself (*VMR*, 18), and then, in succession, by an onager, by a stag and even by a dragon (*VMR*, ch. 19); in *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 5, ch. 7, 24 one finds an eagle at work. In *VO* it is interesting that Onuphrius is preceded by a 'column of fire' (*columna ignis*, ch. 10), a probable allusion to the prodigy related in Ex. 13:21.

God of heaven' (*confitemini Deo caeli*) as God gives 'food to all flesh' (*escam omni carni*, 6, § 23 [50–51]).<sup>26</sup> Such praise and thanksgiving is also a profession of faith. Likewise Onuphrius, who lived for sixty years 'nourished by God's mercy' (*nutritus a Dei misericordia*, *VO*, 8),<sup>27</sup> or Mary the Egyptian, who makes her way into the desert taking with her just a few loaves (cf. *VMAe*, 17), or Paul of Thebes, who for sixty years relies on heaven to nourish him (cf. *VP*, 10), furnish ample evidence of such an unlimited trust. In addition, many other anchorites could be cited.

While supernatural intervention takes place in various ways, one feature occurs in several texts: mention of daily repetition.<sup>28</sup> 'The loving God nourishes them each day' (*Dominus pius* [. . .] *eos pascit cotidie*).<sup>29</sup> The same is said of the anchorites in *VO* (ch. 9); later on, Onuphrius says of himself: 'The loving God sent me an angel of his to bring me some bread every day' (*misitque pius Dominus angelum suum ferentem michi cotidie panem*, ch. 13).<sup>30</sup> With reference to an unidentified monk, it is said in *HM* that God himself 'took upon himself the task of nourishing him every day' (*quotidiani victus eius revocat curam*, ch. 1). Also the twenty-four old monks of the community of Ailbe get their ration of bread 'every day' (*omni die*, *NB*, 12, § 30 [57–58]): a sign, as their abbot puts it, of Christ's constant care, by which they have benefited for a long time: "thus Christ feeds us from the time of Saint Patrick and Saint Ailbe, our father, for eighty years until now" (*"ita nutrit nos Christus a tempore sancti Patricii et sancti Ailbei patris nostri usque modo per octoginta annos"*, *NB*, 12, § 32 [61–63]).

On some occasions there is no need for God to renew his bounty day after day, for the food and water sent by him last for a long time without being exhausted (as in the miracle operated by Elias

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Ps. 136 (135):25–26.

<sup>27</sup> A similar observation is made by the monk Theophilus in the *VMR*: '[The Creator of everything] fed us by his own gracious will' ([*Creator omnium*] *gratuita nos sua gratia nutriebat*, ch. 14).

<sup>28</sup> This aspect, emphasising at the same time God's care of his servants and the constant faith they are bound to, might be a reminiscence of the properties of manna, bestowed upon the people of Israel according to Ex. 16:4. The daily recurrence of the gift may also recall the demand expressed by the *oratio dominica* in Luke's text: 'Give us day by day our daily bread' (*Panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie*, Luke 11:3).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Matt. 6:26.

<sup>30</sup> Shortly afterwards in the same chapter, Onuphrius confirms the miracle with a certain solemnity of tone: "for thirty years Our Lord daily visited me" (*"per* [. . .] *triginta annos* [. . .] *visitavit me Dominus in diem*").

for Zarepta's widow).<sup>31</sup> "A long journey lies ahead of you" (*Restat* [. . .] *vobis longum iter*"), a mysterious *iuvenis* tells Brendan, offering him 'a basket full of bread and a jar of water' (*cophinum plenum panibus et amphoram aquae*, 8, § 2 [3]), "nevertheless"—so he reassures him—"neither bread nor water will fail you from now until Easter" (*tamen non deficiet vobis panis neque aqua ab isto die usque in Pascha*", 8, § 3 [5–6]). Whereas the sustenance given to Brendan is sufficient for the whole of Lent, the three loaves which Mary the Egyptian takes with her into the desert are intended to last much longer (cf. *VMAe*, 17 and 18) and to be her only source of nourishment until death.<sup>32</sup>

God's interventions are occasionally brought about through intermediaries: angels, as in the case of Onuphrius: 'God sent his angel' (*misit* [. . .] *Dominus angelum suum*, *VO*, 13),<sup>33</sup> one unspecified 'dependant creature' (*subiecta creatura*) which nurtures Ailbe's community (*NB*, 12, § 29 [57]); a mysterious *procurator* who supports Brendan and his companions;<sup>34</sup> animals of various kinds, based on the crows which help the prophet Elijah.<sup>35</sup> Thus the helpful otter which for thirty years has taken Paul the Hermit one fish every three days (cf. *NB*, 26, § 37 [70–78]), has many analogies elsewhere. But it is not necessary to dwell upon this service paid to saints by animals, for it is already well known.

Sometimes what secures survival and restores exhausted energies is not earthly food but some supernatural event which removes the desire for material necessities, allowing one to enjoy a foretaste of life in Paradise. In *VO* a 'dreadful man' (*vir terribilis*) touches Paphnutius's lips, a gesture which frees him from any physical and spiritual prostration, as he himself remembers: "at once I resumed strength, so

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 17:14.16.

<sup>32</sup> At *HM*, 7 mention is made of food which remains uncorrupted from Easter to Whitsunday, and of three sacks full of bread which miraculously stays fresh for four months.

<sup>33</sup> An explicit mention of angels is made too, for example, at *HM*, 2. 10. 11.

<sup>34</sup> He appears on several occasions during their voyage, and his functions go well beyond catering. In hagiographical texts entities of supernatural origin with a human appearance are easy to find (cf. 'some young man' (*quidam adolescens*, *HM*, 11); 'a most splendid man' (*vir splendidissimus*, *VO*, 4); 'a man of venerable age' (*virum quendam canitie venerabilem*, *VMR*, 18). A probable scriptural model for such kind of disguise, mainly in case of guiding figures, is the angel Raphael in the book of Tobias, appearing as a young man for the whole duration of his mission and revealing his identity only at the end.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 3 Kings 17:6. It is a crow that brings Paul of Thebes his daily ration of bread (cf. *VP*, 10).

that I did not feel tired, nor did I remember to be hungry” (“*subito virtutem accepi, ita ut nec fatigarer neque famis inopiae memorarem*”, *VO*, 6).<sup>36</sup> He meets with the same experience on hearing Onuphrius’s *melliflua verba*: “I forgot any hunger or thirst” (“*famis [. . .] et sitis inopiam oblivioni tradidi*”, *VO*, 15). Similar oblivion of the necessities of nature is also experienced by Brendan and his monks when they see the crystal pillar: ‘they had had no slack time in which to take food or drink since they had seen the pillar’ (*nullum taedium habebant de cibo sumere aut potu postquam viderunt illam columnam*, *NB*, 22, § 17 [35–36]). On another occasion, thanks to Paul the Hermit’s water, they manage to spend the whole of Lent ‘remaining untouched by hunger or thirst’ (*sine ulla esurie et siti*, *NB*, 27, § 2 [5]).<sup>37</sup>

The only source of sustenance for some anchorites is the practice of the Eucharist: in *HM*, 15, John’s case is mentioned. Yet many others also survived for several years without feeding on earthly nourishment.<sup>38</sup> In the *Navigatio* Paul is nourished for sixty years on nothing other than the miraculous water from his spring;<sup>39</sup> and Barind, just by being in the *Terra Repromissionis*, can spend a whole year there not only without tasting any food or drink but even without feeling any need for sleep.<sup>40</sup>

The atmosphere of these episodes (I obviously cannot list them all) clearly reminds us of various pages of the Bible, in particular of the spiritual climate of the exodus from Egypt and of the Israelites’

<sup>36</sup> A similar episode in *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 6, section 3, ch. 12 (PL 73, 1010D).

<sup>37</sup> In the island of the huge grapes a sweet fragrance attracts the monks to forget their fasting (cf. *NB*, 26, § 10 [18–19]).

<sup>38</sup> Thus in *HM*, 2 *abba* Or recounts: ‘a man did not assume any earthly food for three whole years’ (*hominem [. . .] per tres continuos annos nullum sumsisse terrenum cibum*), for an angel ‘brought him heavenly food every three days’ (*tertia quaque die escam deferebat ei caelestem*). Cf. also *HM*, 8; *HL*, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Brendan tells his monks of their forthcoming meeting with Paul in these terms: “you will now see Paul the spiritual Hermit, who has lived in this island for sixty years without any bodily food” (“*videbitis Paulum heremitam spiritalem, in hac insula sine ullo victu corporali commorantem per sexaginta annos*”, 26, § 6 [8–10]); later on, Paul says about himself: “For sixty years since, I have lived on this well without nourishment of any other food” (“*vixi per sexaginta annos sine nutrimento alterius cibi nisi de hoc fonte*”, 26, § 42 [83–84]).

<sup>40</sup> “Yet for the equivalent of one year you have been on this island and have not tasted food or drink! You have never been overcome by sleep” (“*Unum annum enim es in hac insula et non gustasti de cibo aut de potu. Nunquam fuisti oppressus somno*”, *NB*, 1, §§ 24–25 [57–58]).

experiences in the desert,<sup>41</sup> and of the attitude implied by the admonition of the Gospel: “Therefore do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?”” (*Nolite ergo solliciti esse dicentes: “Quid manducabimus” aut “quid bibemus” aut “quo operiemur?”*, Matt. 6:31).<sup>42</sup> For such topics, indeed, it is to be surmised that, besides the monastic tradition, the Bible is the direct point of reference and source of inspiration to which the different stories turn independently of one another. As to the specific case of the *Navigatio*, only seldom can one find elements allowing one to presume, or even vaguely perceive, the mediation of other texts. One may at most venture to ask whether the strong presence, in the *Vitae patrum*, of some distinctive motifs has possibly favoured their introduction into the *Navigatio* as well. But generally one cannot push hypotheses any further.

However, sometimes the link appears certain. By way of example, before leaving the topic of the supply of food, I shall compare two passages of the *Navigatio* with passages in *VP*, *VO* and *HM*.<sup>43</sup> In the first episode, which takes place in the island with the deserted *oppidum*, Brendan’s *minister*, sent forward to arrange the meal, finds the table already prepared with loaves ‘of marvellous whiteness’ (*miri candoris*) and fish (cf. *NB*, 6, §§ 21–22 [46–47]). In the second episode, the abbot of Ailbe’s community, while he is having supper with Brendan and his companions, tells them he does not know whence the food is coming and adds that, on each working day, each monk receives half a loaf, whereas on the occasion of their arrival they have had ‘a double supply’ (*duplicem annonam*, cf. *NB*, 12, § 23 [45–46] and 12, §§ 28–31 [54–61]).

*NB*, 6, §§ 21–22 [46–49] *Brendanus dixit ministro suo qui solebat **panem apponere** fratribus: “Fer prandium<sup>44</sup> quod **nobis Deus misit**”. Qui statim*

<sup>41</sup> Such experience is summarised in Deut. 2:7: “He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God (has been) with you; you have lacked nothing” (“*novit iter tuum quomodo transieris solitudinem hanc magnam per quadraginta annos habitans tecum Dominus Deus tuus et nihil tibi defuit*”).

<sup>42</sup> This passage is explicitly quoted in *VO*, 13. See also Matt. 6:34, quoted in turn in *VA*, ch. 3, 1, and Matt. 6:32–33, evoked in *HM*, *Prologus*.

<sup>43</sup> The most striking similarities, particularly in verbal usage, are in bold, whereas less cogent correspondences are marked by broken lines.

<sup>44</sup> The expression *Fer prandium* is found also in *Vulg.* Dan. 14:33.

*surrexit: invenit mensam positam et lintheamina et panes singulos miri candoris et pisces.* ([Then] Saint Brendan spoke to the one who usually placed bread before the brothers: "Bring the meal that God has sent us". This man stood up immediately, found a table made ready and linen and a loaf for each of marvellous whiteness and fish').

*NB*, 12, § 23 [45–46] *surrexit unus ex fratribus [. . .] et coepit ministrare mensam*<sup>45</sup> *panibus miri candoris et quibusdam radicibus incredibilis saporis.* ('one of the brothers [. . .] got up and served the table with loaves of extraordinary whiteness and some roots of incredible sweetness').

*NB*, 12, §§ 28–31 [54–61] *Panes vero quos videtis, nobis ignotum est ubi praeparantur aut quis portat ad nostrum cellarium; sed tamen notum nobis est quod ex Dei magna elemosina ministrantur servis suis per aliquam subiectam creaturam. Nos sumus hic viginti quatuor fratres; omni die habemus duodecim panes ad nostram refectionem: inter duos, singulos panes. In festivitatis et in dominicis diebus integros panes singulis fratribus addit Deus ut coenam habeant ex fragmentis; modo in adventu vestro duplicem annonam habemus.* ('We have no idea where the loaves that you see are baked or who carries them to our larder. What we do know is that they are given to his servants from the great charity of God by means of some dependant creature. There are twenty-four of us brothers here. Every day we have twelve loaves for our food, a loaf between every two. On feast-days and Sundays God increases the supply to one full loaf for each brother, so that they can have supper from what is left over. Just now on your coming we have a double supply').

*VP*, 10 *integrum panem [. . .] deposuit [. . .] "Eia", inquit Paulus, "Dominus nobis prandium misit [. . .] Sexaginta iam anni sunt quod dimidii semper panis fragmentum accipio: verum ad adventum tuum, militibus suis Christus duplicavit annonam".* ('He laid down a whole loaf of bread. "Greetings", Paul said, "our Lord sent us a dinner. For sixty years now I have been receiving a piece of bread; now, on your arrival, Christ doubled the catering for his soldiers"').

*VO*, 16 *Accipe panem quem misit Dominus nobis; cotidie enim michi medius panis ferebatur modo pro te, frater Paphnuti, sanus nobis a Deo panis missus est* ('Take the bread God sent us; for every day half a loaf was brought to me, but now for your sake, brother Paphnutius, a whole loaf of bread has been sent us by God').

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ps. 78 (77):19 'Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?' (*numquid poterit Deus parare mensam in deserto*), a passage nearly literally transcribed in *HM*, 11; cf. Ps. 78 (77):20; Ps. 23 (22):5.



*VO*, 22 *ecce quinque panes appositos vidimus, pulchriores nimis et recentes, quasi eadem hora coctos, et sedentes comedimus; et dixerunt michi: "Ecce, frater Paphnuti, cotidie nobis quattuor feruntur panes; hodie pro tui adventu quinque nobis astiterunt; ideoque nescimus unde veniunt nisi quia paratos illos accipimus"* ('we saw five loaves of bread laid there, very fine and fresh, as if cooked that same hour; we sat down and ate, and they said to me: "Look, brother Paphnutius, every day four loaves are brought to us; today, on your arrival, there have been five; but we do not know whence they have come, we simply find them laid"').

*HM*, 1 *Deus* [. . .] *ad providentiae suae sollicitudinem quotidiani victus eius* [*sc. cuiusdam monachi*] *revocat curam. Ut enim ei cibi usum poposcisset naturae necessitas, ingrediens speluncam suam inveniebat mensae panem superpositum, mirae suavitatis, mirique candoris*<sup>46</sup> ('God burdens the care of his providence with the task to nourish him daily: whenever a natural need required him to consume some food, he went into his cave and found some bread, incredibly soft and incredibly white, laid on the table').

Many resemblances between the passages in the *Navigatio* and the other texts are so striking that they cannot be ascribed to coincidence. In such cases it seems correct to suppose that the relevant episodes of the *Navigatio* have been composed by fusing together elements taken from other hagiographical tales. For convenience, I summarise here the main similarities:

- supernatural origin of the food: *prandium* [. . .] *nobis Deus misit* (*NB*, 6, § 21 [47]); *Dominus nobis prandium misit* (*VP* 10)
- God's intervention takes place every day: *omni die* (*NB*, 12, § 30 [57–58]); *cotidie* (*VO* 16 e 22); *quotidiani victus* (*HM* 1)

<sup>46</sup> It is also worth citing here ch. 7 of the *HM*: *ante fores speluncae astare vident homines quosdam sibi penitus ignotos, quique tam multas copias rerum omnium, quae ad usum dumtaxat ciborum pertinent, detulerunt* [. . .] *panes calidi et mundissimi* [. . .]. *Viri vero qui haec detulerunt, statim ut tradiderunt, quasi festinanter ad eum, a quo missi fuerant, redire cupientes, mox discedunt* [. . .]. *Quorum copia tanta fuit, ut usque ad diem Pentecostem quotidie ministrata sufficerent; certi quod haec sibi a Deo solemnitate gratia missa sint*. ('They see, standing before the entrance of the cave, certain men whom they did not know at all, and who brought great quantities of any sort of materials pertaining to the provision of food, such as loaves of bread, warm and very pure [. . .]. The men who had brought these things, as soon as they delivered them, departed immediately as if they wanted to go back to him who had sent them').



- table laid: *panem apponere* (NB, 6, § 21 [46–47]); *panes appositos vidimus* (VO 22); *invenit mensam positam* (NB, 6, § 22 [48]); *inveniebat mensae panem superpositum* (HM, 1)
- the direct origin of the bread unknown: *nobis ignotum est ubi praeparantur aut quis portat* [sc. *panes*] (NB, 12, § 28 [54–55]); *nescimus unde veniunt* [sc. *panes*] *nisi quia paratos illos accipimus* (VO, 22)
- the shape of the bread: *miri candoris* (NB, 6, § 22 [48–49] and 12, § 23 [45–46]); *mirique candoris* (HM, 1)
- the taste of the food: *incredibilis saporis* (NB, 12, § 23 [46]); *mirae suavitatis* (HM, 1)
- the distribution of bread varies according to the presence of guests: *omni die habemus* [. . .] *inter duos, singulos panes* (NB, 12, § 30 [57–59]); *modo in adventu vestro duplicem annonam habemus* (NB, 12, § 31 [60–61]); *ad adventum tuum* [. . .] *Christus duplicavit annonam* (VP, 10); *cotidie* [. . .] *medius panis ferebatur*; *modo pro te* [. . .] *sanus nobis a Deo panis missus est* (VO, 16); *cotidie nobis quattuor feruntur panes*; *hodie pro tui adventu, quinque nobis astiterunt* (VO, 22)
- other lexical links: *integros panes* (NB, 12, § 31 [59])/ *integrum panem* (VP, 10); *fragmentis* (NB, 12, § 31 [60])/ *fragmentum* (VP, 10)

What has been said so far does not exhaust the motifs connected with food, which recur as insistently in the *Navigatio* as in other texts such as the *VO* and the earlier part of the *VMR*; they are in fact even more frequent in the *Navigatio*. Further study should be made of such issues as diet (quality and quantity of food and drink, frequency and times of meals) and the different types of food linked to liturgical periods, particular feasts, the days of the week and the arrival of guests.<sup>47</sup> In all these aspects, too, similarities are often revealed between the *Navigatio* and the other texts examined. And still, yet again, similarity does not inevitably mean direct dependence.

Other motifs connected with monastic customs are equally well attested in both the *Navigatio* and in the *Vitae patrum* literature. At least some of the classical themes can be mentioned here: unceasing

<sup>47</sup> As to this last aspect, it is to be noted that the presence of guests does not imply a change, in the *NB*, of the nourishing regime, if one accepts the quantity.

prayer, vigil, fasting, silence. One must also not neglect other features, which, although of lesser importance, are not devoid of interest: the extension to the life of monks of an array of military expressions originally used to describe martyrs,<sup>48</sup> the resort to the sign of the cross as a weapon against devils,<sup>49</sup> the distinction between *orare* ('to pray') and *psallere* ('to sing psalms'),<sup>50</sup> the dialectical opposition between coenobitic and anchoritic life,<sup>51</sup> etc. But here too textual comparisons do not generally reveal such a cogent similarity of form that our texts may be set in a direct relationship with one another. It is possible that the author of the *Navigatio* has developed these topics by drawing on tradition and returning directly to biblical sources which always form the background to this kind of literature.

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This is very reminiscent of the exhortation, which John Cassian ascribes to some Fathers, not to loosen the abstinence in such circumstances (see *Conlationes* 2, 21, ed. Pichery, 1, 133). As to the anchorites' habits of feeding, and not only of that, much evidence has been assembled by L. Regnault, *La vie quotidienne des Pères du désert en Égypte au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1990; Italian transl. *La Vita quotidiana dei padri del deserto*, by Monaci dell'Abbazia di San Bernardo alle Terme, Roma, Casale Monferrato (Alessandria) 1994, 2nd ed. Milano 1999.

<sup>48</sup> See *NB*, 1, § 2 [5]; 23, § 15 [35]; 26, § 1 [1]; § 14 [25]; *VP*, 10; 16; *VH*, 2, 6; 3, 3; 3, 8, ed. Bastiaensen and Smit, *Vita di Martino*; *VO*, 46, 47; *HM*, 1. As to the monk as heir of the martyr, see e.g. E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr. The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr*, Washington 1950 (Studies in Christian Antiquity, 12), supplemented by E. Malone, 'The Monk and the Martyr', in: *Antonius Magnus Eremita*, ed. B. Steidle, Roma 1956 (Studia Anselmiana, 38), 201–28; see also A. de Vogüé, 'Martyrium in occulto. Le martyr du temps de paix chez Grégoire le Grand, Isidore de Séville et Valerius du Bierzo', in: *Fructus centesimus. Mélanges G. J. M. Bartelink*, ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, A. Hilhorst and C. H. Kneepkens, Steenbrugge 1989 (Instrumenta Patristica, 19), 125–40.

<sup>49</sup> In the *Navigatio* this gesture is ascribed to Brendan and occurs twice near the island of the blacksmiths: 'the venerable father armed himself, making the sign of the Lord in all four directions' (*pater armat se dominico trophaeo in quatuor partes*, *NB*, 23, § 4 [8–9]) and 'the man of God blessed himself again' (*vir Dei iterum se armat*, *NB*, 23, § 7 [15]). In other texts such occurrences are so abundant as to discourage any quotation.

<sup>50</sup> In the *Navigatio* *orare* and *deprecari* are acts different from *psallere* (*cantare psalmos, officium*). Among other texts see *Vitae patrum (Verba seniorum)*, book 7, ch. 63, 2 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 283); *VH*, 3, 5, 11; 4, 3; 17, 7; 21, 4, ed. Bastiaensen and Smit, *Vita di Martino*; *Vita Malchi*, 5; *VMAe*, 7. The distinction between *psallere* and *orare* has been studied by A. de Vogüé, 'Psalmody n'est pas prier', *Ecclesia orans*, 6 (1989), 7–32.

<sup>51</sup> See *NB*, 1, § 7; ch. 26; *passim* in *VO*, *VMAe*, *Vita Malchi*, etc.

2. *Some topoi*

After examining the various nuances to be seen in the attitude of dependence on God, which governs the whole atmosphere of the *Navigatio*, I shall point to some elements in its plot which have several precedents in the desert literature and, more generally, in hagiographical texts. I shall limit my choice of motifs.

For example, Satan takes on material form as an 'Ethiopian child' (*infans Aethiopum*, *NB*, 6, § 26 [56]; cf. 7, § 6 [12]); this follows a well-established tradition. Already in *VA*, 4 a 'bristly and black boy' (*puer horridus atque niger*) is described,<sup>52</sup> and in *HL*, 11 a feminine version of a devil occurs, who is turned 'into an Ethiopian girl' (*in puellam Aethiopissam*). In *VMR*, 4, moreover, an attempt to burn three pilgrim monks alive is made by 'nearly 3000' (*quasi tria milia*) Ethiopians joined together.<sup>53</sup>

The island of Hell emits a 'terrible stench' (*ingens fetor*, *NB*, 23, § 14 [34]), which is even perceived at a great distance and recalls the 'worst and unbearable smell' (*pessimus et intolerabilis fetor*) in a similar scene of the *VMR*, 9. A 'foulest smell' (*odor teterrimus*) is also experienced by Anthony when he comes near a possessed (*VA*, 35), and in the *HL* the *abba* Pacon, for slapping a demon in the face, is sickened for two years by the smell of his own hand.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> This is the first appearance, in monastic literature, of the topic of the devil depicted with the features of a black baby. Cf. Athanase d'Alexandrie, *Vie d'Antoine*, ed. and transl. G. J. M. Bartelink, Paris 1994 (Sources chrétiennes, 400), 147 n. 2.

<sup>53</sup> In *HM*, 7 Apollonius 'grabbed at his nape a sort of boy from Ethiopia' (*ad cervices suas apprehendit quasi parvulum quemdam Aethiopem*) and chokes him under the sand; *ibid.* 29, Macarius of Alexandria sees 'certain small, foul Ethiopian boys' (*parvulos quosdam puerulos Aethiopes tetros*) running about inside the church in order to disrupt the monks' prayer. The demon in the form of an Ethiopian also appears in Cassianus' work (*Conlationes* 1, 21; 2, 13; 9, 6, ed. Pichery, 1, 105, 127 and 2, 45). On other occasions, Ethiopian features are given to some sinful man; cf. *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 7, ch. 99, 2 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 329). On these conceptions about devils and on its persistence in the medieval monastic literature, see: B. Steidle, 'Der "schwarze kleine Knabe" in der alten Monchszerzählung', *Benediktinische Monatschrift*, 34 (1958), 339–50; G. Penco, 'Sopravvivenze della demonologia antica nel monachesimo medievale', *Studia monastica*, 13 (1971), 31–36; A. Nugent, 'Black Demons in the Desert', *The American Benedictine Review*, 49 (1998), 209–21.

<sup>54</sup> 'For two years I could not bear the smell of my hand' (*Biennio non poteram ferre manus meae fetorem*, *HL*, 29). An intolerable 'overpowering stench' (*foetoris vehementia*) is found in *HM*, 8, emanating from a dragon killed by the *abba* Ammon, and in the *VH* 18, 4, ed. Bastiaensen and Smit, *Vita di Martino*, it is said that a bunch of green chick-peas releases 'abominable smell' (*putorem teterrimum*) because it originates from greed, etc.

Luckily, the scent of Paradise is also present and, for its part, characterised by its long duration: Barrind's clothes remain permeated by it 'after the space of forty days' (*usque ad quadraginta dies*, *NB*, 1, § 34 [79–80] and § 32 [75–76]). That 'sweetest scent' (*odor suavissimus*) is also mentioned in *VMR*, 13: it sweetens the mouth like a honeycomb and makes one fall asleep. In different circumstances, a scent fills the place where a saint-hermit lives and above all the place where his body is buried.<sup>55</sup>

I also consider as a *topos* the anchorite's nudity, with all its symbolic implications.<sup>56</sup> For this detail, the author of the *Navigatio*, who introduces Paul the Hermit as naked (ch. 26), had at his disposal many models from hagiographical production concerning the Desert Fathers: Onuphrius, Macarius Romanus, Mary the Egyptian and numerous others are naked.<sup>57</sup> From a formal point of view, *VMR* and *VO* are the texts which seem the nearest of all to the *Navigatio*, though for one detail this could also derive from the *VP*. The following synopsis permits evaluation of the parallels.

| <i>Navigatio s. Brendani</i>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>Vita Macharii Romani</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Vita Onuphrii</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>Vita Pauli</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ch. 26, § 19 [34–36]<br><i>Erat enim coopertus<br/>totus capillis suis et<br/>barba et ceteris<br/>pilis usque ad pedes</i> , <sup>58</sup><br><i>et erant candidi sicut<br/>nix prae nimia<br/>senectute</i> | ch. 15<br><i>cuius capilli, instar<br/>lactis candidissimi aut<br/>nivis</i> [ . . . ] <i>totum viri<br/>corpus operuerunt</i><br>[ . . . ] <i>Ipsius vero capilli<br/>capitis ac barbae erant<br/>candidi ut lac</i> [ . . . ]<br><i>prae senectute<br/>nimia, oculi eius non<br/>aperiebantur</i> | ch. 6<br><i>Capilli capitis sui<br/>maiores, albi tam-<br/>quam nix et huic<br/>corpus coopertum</i><br><br>ch. 2<br><i>Vidi</i> [ . . . ] <i>virum nudum a<br/>vestibus, capillis<br/>vero toto corpore<br/>coopertum</i> | ch. 1<br><i>Nonnulli</i> [ . . . ] <i>iactitant</i><br>[Paulum] <i>crinitum calca-<br/>neo tenus hominem fuisse</i><br><br>ch. 10<br><i>En quem tanto labore<br/>quaesisti, putridis<br/>senectute membris<br/>operit inculta canities</i> |

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 7, ch. 52, 4 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 263); *VMR*, 15; *VO*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Hieronymus, *Epistolae*, 14, 1; 125, 50. The major work of reference on this topic remains C. A. Williams, 'Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite', *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 10 (1925), 195–242 and 11 (1926), 427–509 (but note the very critical review by P. Peeters in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 47 (1929), 138–41).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *VO*, 2; 3; 6; 13; *VMR*, 15; 49; *VMaE*, 7; 9; 19; *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 6, section 3, ch. 4. 10. 11. 12; Sulpicii Severi *Dialogi*, 1, 17 (Sulpicii Severi *Libri qui supersunt*, ed. C. Halm, vol. 1, Vindobonae [Wien] 1866 (CSEL, 1), 152–216, here 169).

<sup>58</sup> The expression *usque ad pedes* (*NB*, 26) is probably a variation of *calcaneo tenus* ('until the heels', *VP*, 1). In Jerome's text, Paul of Thebes is not described as a

Further *topoi* have been exploited in the *Navigatio*. Amongst the most interesting is the *locus amoenus*, whose typical features are obviously concentrated in the description of the *Terra Repromissionis* (ch. 1 and 28), but also appear elsewhere, above all in the island of the giant grapes (ch. 18).<sup>59</sup>

The characteristics of such places are the usual ones: trees laden with ever-ripe fruit (28, § 6. § 17 [12–13; 33–34]) or with bunches of grapes of incredible size and ‘extraordinary redness’ (*mirae rubicunditatis*, 18, § 2. § 4 [4; 7]); precious stones (1, § 18 [43]; 28, § 14. § 18 [28; 35–36]); an abundance of grass, flowers and roots (1, § 16. § 18 [39; 42]; 18, § 11 [19–20]); constantly flowing springs (18, § 11 [19–20]); sweetest scents (18, § 9. § 10 [16; 18]); the presence of ‘a great river’ (*fluvius magnus*, 28, § 8 [17]); lack of any hunger, thirst and need to sleep (1, § 24. § 25 [56–58]); no darkness at night, and, as the crowning feature, eternal daylight, which is solemnly explained by reference to the Apocalypse: ‘for its light is Christ’ (*lux enim illius est Christus*,<sup>60</sup> 1, § 25 [58–59]; 28, § 6. § 17 [14; 34]).

Places of this kind, which may lack all the aforesaid qualities, are also found in the tiny oases occupied in oriental deserts by some anchorites. Near Timotheus’s cave (*VO*, ch. 2–3) flows a ‘very fine source of water’ (*fons aquae speciosus nimis*), and a ‘splendid palm’ (*palma* [. . .] *valde mirabilis*) grows there which each month bears a branch full of fruits.<sup>61</sup> In an even more fertile garden, with plenty of water and many types of trees (again in the *VO*, ch. 23), four young hermits welcome the pilgrim Paphnutius. He is so overjoyed by this reception that he exclaims: “‘I thought I was in God’s Paradise’” (*putabam me esse in paradiso Dei*).<sup>62</sup>

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naked anchorite. Indeed, Jerome blames everything that had contributed to spread this and similar stories (see the passage quoted in the synopsis). In *VP*, moreover, there are various references to the coat Paul had made by himself with palm leaves entwined (*VP*, 6; 12; 16). In the iconographic tradition too Paul figures as dressed.

<sup>59</sup> The story of the bird taking to Brendan a bunch of grapes of immense size from this island (*NB*, 18, §§ 2–4 [2–8]) reminds one of Num. 13. Some unknown being also takes to Apollonius (*HM*, 7) grapes of which the text stresses the ‘incredible size’ (*magnitudo incredibilis*).

<sup>60</sup> This expression (referring to Apocalypse 21:23 and 22:5) and, in general, the description of the *Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum* have been placed in the first and in the last chapter of *Navigatio*, by way of inclusion.

<sup>61</sup> This image significantly depends on Revelation 22:2; see also Ezekiel 47:12.

<sup>62</sup> The biblical model for this expression is probably Gen. 2:8–10. Further examples: *VH*, 21, 2–4 (ed. Bastiaensen and Smit, *Vita di Martino*); *HM*, 11; 17 (note also the practice of silence and the lack of diseases reminiscent of *NB*, 12); 29. For the

When the *locus amoenus* is identified with Paradise or with the *Terra Repromissionis*, it is sometimes linked with the *topos* of the local guardian, probably deriving from the Bible. Just as the cherubim in Genesis 3: 24 prevent access to the garden of Eden, so in the *Navigatio* a supernatural being, talking on one occasion to Barrind and on another to Brendan, shows them the limits of their journey and urges them to return to their country (see *NB*, 1, §§ 19–21 [43–52]; 28, §§ 8–17 [17–34]). Macarius too, after coming as close as twenty miles from Paradise, is brought to a halt by an angel, who explains the reason for this prohibition by recourse to the same quotation from Genesis 3 (*VMR*, 16).<sup>63</sup>

Other passages might be added, if it were possible to devote more space to these topics. This research illustrates how, compared to the texts so far analysed, the *Navigatio* interprets the various motifs in a substantially different way. This independent interpretation may conceal precise sources. From time to time, however, some more precise evidence emerges of the material the author had in mind, as the case of certain naked anchorites who are covered merely by their own long hair.

### 3. *A Stylistic Feature: the Provision of Precise Data*

A stylistic feature typical of the *Navigatio*, which is also found in some tales about journeys in the desert, is the provision of precise data concerning the duration of the voyage, the distance between the different stages, how long it took to discharge various operations (in order, for instance, to find a landing place), the length of each stop and of the fasting periods, the duration of the provisions, etc. This meticulousness contrasts strikingly with the vagueness characteristic

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image of the 'flowering' desert, a reference is also possible to Isa. 51:3 'the Lord [...] will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord' ([*Dominus*] *ponet desertum eius* [sc. of Sion] *quasi delicias et solitudinem eius quasi hortum Domini*).

<sup>63</sup> The paradisiacal monastery of *abba* Isidore, in the Thebaid, was looked after by a *senior* of the community; yet, strangely, his task was not to prevent people from getting in, but from going out! (cf. *HM*, 17). For the legends regarding the earthly Paradise, some parts of A. Graf's *Miti, leggende e superstizioni del medio evo*, Torino 1892–93, 2 vols, repr. Torino 1925, Milano 1984 (Saggi, 94) are still fundamental. See esp. pp. 37–142 and 349–58 of the last edition.

of other aspects of the voyage. The principal sources of inspiration are perhaps traceable to *VO* and *VMR*, where one finds at least twenty-two and twenty-five statements of this kind respectively. In the *Navigatio* I have noted around sixty cases. Although we have to consider that the *Navigatio* is twice as long as the *VO* and three times as long as the *VMR*, such figures indicate, beyond any possible doubt, that this taste for exact detail found favour with our author.<sup>64</sup> Such convergence between the *Navigatio*, *VO* and *VMR* called for a detailed comparison of the passages which show this tendency, but the inquiry did not reveal any exact coincidence or any strictly verbal relationships. This negative outcome, however, is not sufficient to rule out the hypothesis that the *Vitae patrum* may also have influenced the *Navigatio* in this respect.

By way of example of these characteristics, here are some passages in which the phenomenon is made especially evident by the recurrence, in close proximity, of the same numerical datum:<sup>65</sup>

*NB*, 3, §§ 1–2 [1–3] *Definivit* [. . .] *Brendanus* [. . .] *ieiunium quadraginta dierum* [. . .] *Transactis iam quadraginta diebus* ('Saint Brendan [. . .] decided to fast for forty days [. . .] when the forty days were over').

*VO*, 11 *habitavi cum eo per dies septem* [. . .] *Post septem vero dies* ('I lived with him for seven days [. . .] After seven days').

*VMR*, 21 *annos tres sepultus in eadem fossa peregi* [. . .] *Tribus itaque annis evolutis* ('I spent three years buried in the same grave [. . .] After three years').

As a separate category, there are some statements (also providing objective data) concerning the large number of years the monks lived in the place allotted to them by providence or which were spent in a particular way (abstaining from bread, refraining from any human contact, etc.).

<sup>64</sup> This is all the more evident if, besides the statements of which I have so far traced the typology, one takes into account the numerical specifications often relating to persons, objects and gestures. The quantitative statements and, more in general, the realistic exactness of this text are discussed by G. Orlandi, 'L'isola paradisiaca di san Brendano: in America o vicino a casa?', *Itineraria*, 1 (2002), 89–112.

<sup>65</sup> Further examples of this kind: *NB*, 1, §§ 17–19 [41–43]; 6, § 11 [25]; *VO*, 12; *VMR*, 8.



Such statements are frequently found in the *Vitae* of the Desert Fathers. Moreover, the steadfast pursuit of a condition of heroic asceticism, and especially the act of always remaining in the same place,<sup>66</sup> correspond above all to the didactic aim of this kind of story. By way of emphasis and excess, they offer their readers an ideal of perfection so sublime that it turns out to be unattainable in real life, and they do so in order to maintain a tendency towards this ideal.

Details of this kind are already found in the *VA* (ch. 14, regarding the twenty years spent by the saint in a desert fortress), and in the *VP* which mentions, for instance, the thirty years a monk was secluded (ch. 6);<sup>67</sup> in it Paul of Thebes, describing himself to Anthony, does not fail to tell him: 'for sixty years now I have always received half a portion of bread' (*sexaginta iam anni sunt quod dimidii semper panis fragmentum accipio*, ch. 10). St Mary the Egyptian too, when Zosima reaches her, tells him that she has spent forty-seven years in the desert (*VMae*, 18) and that for seventeen years her only food has been a small amount of bread and herbs (*VMae*, 19). But, according to the *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), there was somebody who survived even longer: 'fifty years in the desert without tasting any bread or taking water to satiety' (*per quinquaginta annos [. . .] in deserto, neque panem gustans neque aquam ad satietatem accipiens*).<sup>68</sup> Likewise, in the *Vita Abrahæ et Mariæ*, it is stated that Abraham 'for the fifty years of his abstinence he had never tasted any bread' (*quinquaginta annis abstinentiæ suæ nequaquam panem gustaverat*, ch. 7).<sup>69</sup> Timotheus too, in the

<sup>66</sup> The order to remain in a specific place for the rest of his life is passed on by an old man to Onuphrius: 'you must live here for all the days of your life' (*Hic te habitare oportet omnibus diebus vitæ tuæ*, *VO*, 12), words echoed, in the *Navigatio*, by Saint Patrick, who prophesies to Paul: 'you will find a boat [. . .] which will bring you to the spot where you will await the day of your death' (*invenies navim [. . .] quæ te ducet ad locum ubi expectabis diem mortis tuæ*, 26, § 32 [61–62]). See also *HL*, 29. The life-long stay in one place is often connected with longevity, which is anyway a recurring feature of this kind of texts (see *NB*, 12, § 57; 26, § 43 [84–87]; *VP*, 7; *Vita Malchi*, 2; *HM*, 25; *VO*, 7–8; 20–21; *VMR*, 15).

<sup>67</sup> Hilarion too 'had already spent twenty-two years in the desert' (*viginti et duos iam in solitudine habebat annos*) before he began his several journeys (*VH*, 7, 1, ed. Bastiaensen and Smit, *Vita di Martino*).

<sup>68</sup> *Vitæ patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 7, ch. 33, 9 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 219).

<sup>69</sup> And again: 'for fifty years he discharged his duty with devotion, humility of heart and sincere love' (*Quinquaginta [. . .] annos magna cum devotione atque humilitate cordis et charitate non ficta institutum suum implevit*, ch. 11; cf. 2 Cor. 6:6). Indications of the same kind are to be found in ch. 7; 8; 10.



*VO*, has not eaten bread for more than thirty years;<sup>70</sup> and Onuphrius, in the first thirty years following his departure from his monastery, behaved the same way, living off wild herbs (ch. 13). Yet for the further thirty years he lived in the desert God visited him directly on a daily basis ('Our Lord visited me every day', *visitavit me Dominus in diem*, ch. 13), a sign of his progress in communicating with supernatural realities. Not by chance did Onuphrius state that anchorites live 'in another world, so to speak' (*quasi in alio mundo*, *VO*, 10). In the *Navigatio* a growing spiritualisation may also be appreciated in Paul's life.<sup>71</sup> After he had been fed for thirty years on the fish brought to him by the otter, he lived in the last sixty years, as we have seen, only on the water from a tiny spring (ch. 26).<sup>72</sup>

Extreme isolation, to the point of meeting nobody for many years, is also explicitly recorded in our texts on a number of occasions. This is the case with Mary the Egyptian (*VMAe*, 20), Onuphrius ('I have not looked upon any man for sixty years, excepting just you today' (*sexaginta [. . .] anni sunt quod [. . .] nullius hominis aspexi effigiem, nisi te solum hodie*, *VO*, 8), the four old men who, like Onuphrius, have been in the desert for sixty years (*VO*, 21), the twenty-four seniors of Ailbe's community<sup>73</sup> and many others.<sup>74</sup> The same is true, in all probability, of Paul the Hermit in the *Navigatio* (ch. 26), though the author does not explicitly stress this aspect. In all these instances, even though some formal similarities are evident, it remains impossible to claim with certainty any direct relationship.

<sup>70</sup> 'It is thirty years and more since I came to this place, I have neither seen nor tasted any kind of bread' (*Triginta et eo amplius anni sunt ex quo in isto veni loco, quod figuram panis non vidi nec gustavi*, *VO*, 3).

<sup>71</sup> Brendan describes him as 'spiritual hermit' (*heremitam spiritalem*) when he predicts their encounter to his crew (ch. 26, § 6 [9]).

<sup>72</sup> A long stay in the desert in hard conditions is also described in *HM*, 1.6.7. 12; *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 6, section 3, ch. 4.12.18; *VO*, 25; Cassianus, *Conlationes*, 3, 1 (Pichery, ed., 1, 139); Sulpicii Severi *Dialogi*, 1, 12.17 (Halm, ed., 1, 163, 169).

<sup>73</sup> The abbot of Ailbe's monastery solemnly states to Brendan: "I confess before my Christ: it is eighty years since we came to this island. We have heard no human voice except when singing praise to God" ("*coram Christo meo fateor: octoginta anni sunt postquam venimus in hanc insulam. Nullam vocem humanam audivimus, excepto quando cantamus Deo laudes*", *NB*, 12, §§ 57–58 [116–118]).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*), book 6, section 3, ch. 9.

4. *Structural Elements*

One must not neglect a set of micro-structures, which constitutes the basis of the structural side of the story. This does not refer to the general plot of the work, which, as is well known, is mostly influenced by Celtic models.<sup>75</sup> Rather, a set of micro-structures or structural elements pertaining to the topic of the voyage occurs, with variation of characters and weight, in nearly all of our texts. This subject, interesting in itself, deserves closer examination. The most frequently recurring motifs are:

- divine predestination of the goal of the voyage<sup>76</sup>
- flight or hurried departure towards such a destination<sup>77</sup>
- rites of reception (genuflexion, sign of peace, embrace, *osculum*, foot-washing)<sup>78</sup>
- questions (usually conventional) put by the pilgrims to the anchorites (sometimes *vice versa*) on the way they arrived in the *eremus* ('whence, when, how, wherefore': *unde, quando, quomodo, ob quam causam* and on the features of their life<sup>79</sup>)
- relevant answers
- a request, expressed by the pilgrims, to remain in the place just reached and refusal on the part of their interlocutors', which is explained in various ways and sometimes followed by an explicit order to return to their country<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> The basic pattern of the story has been discussed by M. Lecco, 'Struttura e mito nella *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', in: *L'Aldilà. Maschere, segni, itinerari visibili e invisibili. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale. Rocca Grimalda, 27-28 settembre 1997*, ed. S. M. Barillari, Alessandria [2000] (L'immagine riflessa, Quaderni, 3), 51-62.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *NB*, 26, § 32 [61-62]; *VO*, 11; 12; *VMR*, 19; etc. The predestination is often implicit: it is to be drawn from the prophetic knowledge anchorites have concerning the moment the pilgrims arrive. In the *VMR* (ch. 19) such powers are even possessed by a dragon.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *NB*, 1, § 7 [17]; 26, § 33 [63]; *VP*, 7; *VO*, 1; 3; 10; 25; *VMR*, 3; etc.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *NB*, 12, § 21[40-42]; 26, §§ 19-21 [19-41]; 26, § 17 [31]; *HM*, 1; 2; 7; 21; Sulpicii Severi *Dialogi*, 1, 4 (Halm, ed., 1, 156).

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *NB*, 12, §§ 13-15 [24-26]; 26, § 26 [49-50]; *Vitae patrum (Verba seniorum)*, book 6, section 3, ch. 9. 11-12; *VO*, 2; 3; 13; *VMAe*, 10; 11; 18; *VMR*, 17; *HM*, 10.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *NB*, 12, §§ 61-63 [123-127]; 28, § 14 [27]; *Vitae patrum (Verba seniorum)*, book 6, section 3, ch. 11-12; *VO*, 5; 17; 22; *VMR*, 22. See also *Vita Brendani insulensis*, 76.

- the death of the anchorites met by the pilgrims, and their burial (the latter is often presented as the goal of the journey in accordance with Providence).<sup>81</sup>

On several occasions, further motifs characterise the journeys and meetings between the visitors and their hosts: the gift of prophecy; permission for two people to recognise one another and call each other by name the first time they meet; saintly conversation; common prayer and the fraternal meal; leave-taking with the additional requirement of telling others what one has experienced; a perception of time different from its real duration; long distances quickly covered.

Nearly all such elements are also attested in the *Navigatio*, though their exact origin in every single passage is hard to establish.

### 5. *An Example of Treatment of the Sources*

Following Brendan, we too have wandered *huc atque illuc* in the archipelago of monastic motifs in the *Navigatio*. Some of them have been carefully explored, others could only be approached, many remaining completely untouched by the route we have taken. However, it is time to draw from our *peregrinatio* some provisional conclusions, to be grouped under two headings. On the one hand, the screening of a certain sample of texts has confirmed, even in the limited examples given here, a situation already known to some extent: many ascetic and religious motifs found in the *Navigatio* (sometimes pertaining to hagiographic folklore) had enjoyed an extraordinary diffusion

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<sup>81</sup> Onuphrius by prophecy reveals to Paphnutius: “you have been sent here in order that you might celebrate my burial” (“*hic a Deo missus es ut corpori meo funeris officium tribuas*”, *VO*, 8); Paul of Thebes does the same when he says to Anthony: “it is time for me to sleep; you have been sent by God to hide my body in the ground” (“*iam dormitionis meae tempus advenit [...] tu missus es a Domino, qui humo corpusculum meum tegas*”, *VP*, 11). ‘Providential’ journeys, connected to the death and burial of the anchorite one visits, are also those undertaken by Zosima to visit Mary the Egyptian (cf. *VMAe*, 25–26), by the deacon James to visit Pelagia (in *Vita Pelagiae*, chs. 13–14) and by other monks referred to in the *Vitae patrum* (*Verba seniorum*): cf. book 6, section 3, chs. 1; 9; 12; book 7, ch. 93, 10 (cf. Freire, ed., *A versão latina*, 1, 320–21). Further examples: *VP*, 16; *VO*, 1; 16; 17. The topic of the burial figures in the *Navigatio* too, although in contexts different from the cases quoted so far: cf. chs. 7, §§ 10–11 [20–21]; 26, §§ 27–31 [50–60].

in the monastic literature of the East, and from there they continued to inspire monastic spirituality. It is therefore quite obvious that our text revives, in some respects, the atmosphere of those remote tales, to the point of making us feel immersed in that climate. Thus, there are clear convergences of *topoi*, but also—and here I pass to the second group—equally great difficulty in locating, for the *Navigatio*, the exact origin of the motifs shared with earlier monastic literary production. But that does not mean that the real sources remain completely untraceable. Texts such as the *Vita Pauli*, the *Vita Onuphrii* and the *Vita Macharii Romani* reveal undoubted links with the *Navigatio*. Several coincidences, even verbal (not only analogies of situation) have been noted by Orlandi,<sup>82</sup> and there is no need to dwell on them. I would rather add to the cases already quoted an example which has so far remained unnoticed.

A passage from the chapter pertaining to Paul the Hermit (*NB*, 26, §§ 15–42 [27–84]) offers an excellent insight into the influence of the *Vita Onuphrii*. The synopsis of the two texts permits a clear view of the author's procedure. The structure of the chapter on Paul in the *Navigatio* (ch. 26) is partly modelled on the section dealing with the anchorite Timotheus in the *VO* (chs. 2–3),<sup>83</sup> as the short summaries inserted into the synopsis reveal. This section of the *VO* has, moreover, suggested to the author of the *Navigatio* the use of the same or similar terms (indicated respectively in bold and in broken underlining).<sup>84</sup>

In other passages of chapter 26, however, the *Navigatio* follows the *Vita Pauli*, which in the end is probably the main source for this section. In our passage, too, the same source is used when the author indicates Paul's gift as a seer who is able to greet by name visitors he had never met before.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Orlandi, *Navigatio. I. Introduzione*, 100–29; cf. Orlandi, 'Temi e correnti', 524–71, esp. 543 ff. Some further comparisons in the same direction have been put forward above, pp. 62–64, 68.

<sup>83</sup> This section is included only in the redaction *BHL* 6334a, critically unpublished (cf. note 16).

<sup>84</sup> No influence on the *Navigatio* came from another version of Timotheus' story, preserved in the *Vitae patrum (Verba seniorum)*, book 6, section 3, ch. 11.

<sup>85</sup> The motif of foresight is also found in the passage of the *VO*, though in a less explicit form. For the high frequency of this particular gift among anchorites, see *VO*, 7; 11; 20; 24; *VMAe*, 9.

*Vita Onuphrii*

TIMOTHEUS APPEARS TO PAPHNUTIUS  
ch. 2

*vidi* [sc. *ego Paphnutius*] *virum* [sc. *Timotheum*]

*Vita Pauli*

RITE OF THE GREETING AND  
KNOWLEDGE OF THE NAMES  
ch. 9

*dum in mutuos miscentur amplexus,*

***propriis*** *se*  
*salutare* ***nominibus*** [. . .]

ch. 10

*Et post sanctum* ***osculum*** ***residens***  
*Paulus* [. . .]

TIMOTHEUS'S NUDITY

ch. 2

*nudum a vestibus,*

***capillis*** *vero* ***toto corpore coopertum***

KNOWLEDGE OF THE NAME

ch. 2

*frater Paphnuti*

[Timotheus knows the pilgrim's  
identity without meeting him  
before and calls him by name]

PAPHNUTIUS'S QUESTIONS TO  
TIMOTHEUS

ch. 3

*Tunc* ***interrogavi*** [sc. *ego Paphnutius*]  
*eum* [*Timotheum*] *dens: Quo tempore*  
***huc advenisti*** [. . .]?

*Navigatio s. Brendani*

PAUL APPEARS TO BRENDAN

ch. 26, § 15 [27–28]

*Brendanus cum appropinquasset ad*  
*ostium speluncae* [. . .] *egressus est senex*  
*foras*

RITE OF THE GREETING AND  
KNOWLEDGE OF THE NAMES

ch. 26, § 17 [31–32]

***osculantibus*** *se invicem ac* ***residen-***  
***tibus, propriis***

***nominibus*** *singulos appellabat*

[NB merges at one stage two pas-  
sages of *VP*, inverting the order of  
the data].

PAUL'S NUDITY

ch. 26, § 19 [34]

*erat enim* ***coopertus totus capillis***  
 *suis*<sup>86</sup>

[KNOWLEDGE OF THE NAME, TAKEN  
FROM *VITA PAULI* AND MOVED  
BEFORE: 26, § 17 (see *supra*)]

BRENDAN'S QUESTIONS TO PAUL

ch. 26, § 26 [49–50]

*tunc sanctus Brendanus* ***interrogabat***  
*illum* [*Paulum*] ***de suo adventu*** *aut*  
*unde esset aut quanto tempore sustinisset*  
*ibi talem vitam*

<sup>86</sup> See also *VP*, 10.

## TIMOTHEUS'S ANSWER

ch. 3

***Ille** [Timotheus] vero ait ad me  
[Paphnutium]*

## PAUL'S ANSWER

ch. 26, § 27 [50–51]

*Cui [Brendano] **ille** [Paulus] respondit*

## TIMOTHEUS'S LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

ch. 3

*Ego, frater, **in** Thebaidae **monasterio**  
cum plurimis fratribus cenobii habitabam  
et operabam cum fratribus tarsicariam;*

## PAUL'S LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

ch. 26, § 27 [51–52]

*Fui nutritus in monasterio sancti  
Patricii per quinquaginta annos,  
et custodiebam cimiterium fratrum.*

TIMOTHEUS'S DECISION TO LEAVE  
(TAKEN BY HIMSELF)

ch. 3

***quodam vero tempore** menti meae  
accidit ut, me solum manentem, protinus  
a Deo plus mercedem accipiam;*

PAUL'S DECISION TO LEAVE (OBEYING  
THE *SENEX*)

ch. 26, § 28 [52. 54]

***Quodam vero die** [. . .]*

ch. 4

*astitit michi quidam vir splendidis-  
simus [. . .] **dicens***

*apparuit mihi quidam senex ignotus  
qui dixit mihi [. . .]*

[NB here seems to echo VO, 4, situated in another context]

## TIMOTHEUS'S DEPARTURE

ch. 3

*surgens autem, exi de monasterio,*

## PAUL'S DEPARTURE

ch. 26, § 33 [63]

*Mane vero [. . .] perfectus sum [sc. de monasterio]*

## TIMOTHEUS'S ARRIVAL IN THE EREMUS

ch. 3

*veniensque in quodam solitario loco*

## PAUL'S ARRIVAL IN THE EREMUS

ch. 26, § 35 [67–68]

*apparuit mihi ista petra, in quam statim intravi*

## TIMOTHEUS'S DWELLING AND FEEDING

ch. 3

***inveni speluncam hanc**  
**et palmam istam cum fonte,**  
quae sunt causa salutis meae*

## PAUL'S DWELLING AND FEEDING

ch. 26, § 42 [82]

***inveni istas duas speluncas**  
**et istum fontem:**  
ab ipso vivo*

[cf. ch. 4 quae sunt vitae meae causa]

*Conclusion*

Within the limits of the motifs considered here, it is likely that various suggestions and, as it were, starting-points were adopted by the author of the *Navigatio* from the widely circulating narrative tradition of a monastic nature, or from the stock of his own, evidently profound biblical knowledge. Yet, on some specific occasions, we have shown that the composition of the *Navigatio* implies the direct and accurate use of a source, sometimes of several sources, which appear to have been reformulated and welded together with some skill. A more careful examination is required concerning method, style and purpose in the use of these sources, as well as further research on possible new sources in the hagiographic and non-hagiographic field. Progress on this issue is to be hoped for, not only for a better knowledge of the author's culture and style, but also in order to be better informed about the afterlife and the indirect transmission of his sources. The traces of the *VO* found in the *Navigatio*, for example, attest to its circulation, in the Carolingian age or perhaps even before, in continental and also insular milieux. This is an interesting conclusion, as the earliest known manuscripts of the *VO* are not earlier than the eleventh century.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Orlandi, 'Temi e correnti', 544–45.

I am very grateful to Giovanni Orlandi for letting me consult his text and commentary of the *Navigatio*, both unpublished. I would also like to thank D. Bottoni, M. Degli Innocenti, P. Giudici and L. Fagnoni. At last, for translating this paper into English, I thank G. Orlandi, G. Burgess and C. Strijbosch.





## THE LITTLE MAN ON A LEAF AND THE TWO CONCEPTS OF THE *DUTCH/GERMAN REISE*

Walter Haug

The legend of the voyage of the Irish abbot Brendan has come down to us in two main versions, which not only differ from one another as to their stock of motifs, but give different motivations for the voyage and thus lend the enterprise a different specific character and meaning in each case. On the one hand, there is the Latin *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*<sup>1</sup> dating from the ninth to the tenth century, perhaps even from the eighth, presumably written in its most widespread form by an Irish monk in Lorraine,<sup>2</sup> with numerous translations into various vernaculars,<sup>3</sup> and on the other the so-called *Reise*,<sup>4</sup> which must have been written in the Middle Frankish area towards the end of the twelfth century<sup>5</sup> and the circulation of which remained restricted to The Netherlands and the Low and High German area.

In the *Navigatio*, the Irish abbot, together with a number of his monks, undertakes a voyage to the *Terra Repromissionis*, the 'Land of Promise', that is, Paradise. The occasion for the voyage is a report by a certain Barrind, who has been there and describes the country

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<sup>1</sup> *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis from early Latin Manuscripts*, ed. Carl Selmer, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Medieval Studies, 16), repr. Blackrock (Co. Dublin) 1989.

<sup>2</sup> On the controversial dating and origin see Glyn S. Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000, 13. The narrative type, as will be shown below, permits the assumption of an Irish author. Cf. also Clara Strijbosch, *De bronnen van De Reis van Sint Brandaan*, Hilversum 1995, 150ff.; English: *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin, 2000, 127 [I quote in the following according to the English edition]. Ioannes Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani. I. Introduzione*, Milano and Varese 1968, 131–60, however, pleads for an origin in Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> The *Navigatio* was a medieval bestseller. Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan*, 13–20, note 125 MSS from the 10th to the 17th century.

<sup>4</sup> On the versions and editions, see below, notes 18–21.

<sup>5</sup> See Hartmut Beckers's cautious attribution of provenience: 'Die mittelfränkischen Rheinlande als literarische Landschaft von 1150 bis 1450', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 108 (1989), Sonderheft, 19–49, here p. 24. On the dating: Barbara Haupt, 'Welterkundung in der Schrift. Brendans 'Reise' und der 'Straßburger Alexander'', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 114 (1995), 321–48, here p. 343.

in such attractive terms that Brendan insists on seeing it for himself. The voyage is represented as a series of twenty-three island adventures in all. And these are of a most peculiar kind. I will illustrate this by a few examples.<sup>6</sup> Brendan and his monks come to a town devoid of people where food is waiting for them, then to an island full of sheep, then to an overgrown island that proves to be a fish which submerges when the monks light a fire, then to an island with a tree full of birds that declare they are the angels who remained neutral during Lucifer's rebellion. Then they come to an island monastery, after which they witness a fight between sea monsters. At one place the sea is transparent and in the depths fearsome creatures are to be seen; then they come upon a sky-high pillar over which a silver net is stretched, then an island with smiths who throw fiery metal at their ship. And so on, until Brendan finally reaches the *Terra Repromissionis*, a fertile and luminous island, into which he is, however, unable to penetrate. After reaching this goal, he returns to Ireland, where he dies.

Scholars are agreed that this sea voyage, as a succession of distinct island adventures, is based, according to its structural pattern, on an Irish literary type which is listed in old Irish genre poetics under the heading of *immram* (plural *immrama*, 'rowings').<sup>7</sup> An *immram* is conceived as a voyage leading from island to island during which the travellers encounter a mixture of the helpful and agreeable with the threatening and pernicious. The occasions for these *immrama* vary widely, but the significance of the initial motif tends to be marginal, as the main interest is in the individual island adventures which the travellers experience on their voyage.<sup>8</sup> Thus, for example, the hero of the *Immram Máel Duín*<sup>9</sup> sets out to find his father's murderers and take revenge on them. After a long voyage of a total of thirty-four island episodes, he finally catches up with them, only to forgive them on the advice of a holy man and then

<sup>6</sup> See the list of episodes in Walter Haug, 'Vom Imram zur Aventure-Fahrt. Zur Frage nach der Vorgeschichte der hochhöfischen Epenstruktur', *Wolfram-Studien*, [1] (1970), 264–98. I quote according to the reprint in: *Strukturen als Schlüssel zur Welt. Kleine Schriften zur Erzählliteratur des Mittelalters*, Tübingen 1989, 379–408, pp. 381ff.

<sup>7</sup> See on this Heinrich Zimmer, 'Keltische Beiträge. II. Brendans Meerfahrt', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur*, 33 (1889), 29–220 and 257–338, here pp. 144ff.; also Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 128.

<sup>8</sup> Zimmer, *Keltische Beiträge*, already noted this as a characteristic (p. 146).

<sup>9</sup> 'The Voyage of Mael Duin', ed. Whitley Stokes, *Revue celtique*, 9 (1888), 447–95; 10 (1889), 50–95; *Immrama*, ed. A. G. van Hamel, Dublin 1941, 20–77.

to return home.<sup>10</sup> The occasion for the *Immram of the three Ua Corra* is said to be that they had speculated on the course of the sun and wanted to see where it went when it set in the ocean; after this, however, this impetus of curiosity is not mentioned again.<sup>11</sup>

The *immram* is therefore fundamentally a voyage made not to a given goal but for its own sake: the events during the voyage exert a fascination which is the greater the more miraculous and fantastic they are. So the attraction lies wholly in the unusual and surprising content of the individual episodes, which succeed one another on the voyage from island to island with no connection or structured order. At first sight, this is also true of the structure and character of the *Navigatio*. However, not only is the structural dependence of the *Navigatio* on the old Irish type of the *immram* evident, it can additionally be shown that the *immram* tradition, and one *immram* in particular, the *Immram Máel Dúin*, provided a number of concrete episodes used in the *Navigatio*.<sup>12</sup>

I examined the connection between the Brendan legend and the Irish *immrama* in a study dated 1970,<sup>13</sup> and my findings have broadly been confirmed in the meantime by the monograph of Clara Strijbosch.<sup>14</sup> I do not need therefore to resume my analysis, but will merely recall its findings briefly. In the second half of the *Immram Máel Dúin* there is a whole block of episodes that have clearly been taken over in the *Navigatio*. Some of this is narrated more clearly in the *Navigatio* than in the *Immram*, which reached us much later; this can be partly supported by the *Immram Ua Corra*, to which there are also similarities. Thus the *Navigatio* must be connected in terms of the history of its motifs with a preliminary stage of the *Immram Máel Dúin*, or whatever this may have been called, a preliminary stage consisting perhaps chiefly of the series of episodes provided by the second part of the *Máel Dúin*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> General analysis: Haug, 'Vom Imram', 386–90.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Voyage of the Húi Corra', ed. Whitley Stokes, *Revue celtique*, 14 (1893), 22–69; van Hamel, *Immrama*, 93–111. See also Haug, 'Vom Imram', 394.

<sup>12</sup> See the juxtaposition of the episodes in Haug, 'Vom Imram', 406 and 408.

<sup>13</sup> See note 6.

<sup>14</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 129–31.

<sup>15</sup> I will not deny that my hypothesis opens room for speculation and that there remain uncertainties with regard to the original form of many details, but there is no convincing argument for a priority in principle of the *Navigatio*. Orlandi's argument [note 2], pp. 79ff., that certain inconsistencies in the episodes of the supernumeraries in the *Máel Dúin* indicate that the motif was adapted incongruously from

Structurally, and also partly as regards the concrete episodes, therefore the *Navigatio* is undoubtedly indebted to the type of the old Irish *immram*. What is new, however, also as to its meaning, is the occasion and the goal of the voyage. The motif of someone hearing a report on a wondrous country beyond the horizon, and then setting off to look for it, derives from a different Irish literary type, known in genre poetics as *echtra*, the simple meaning of which is 'adventure', but by which above all are meant voyages to the Other World.<sup>16</sup> The depiction of the *Terra Repromissionis* too is reminiscent of descriptions of the old Irish Other World. Thus the goal of the *Navigatio* does not share the casual nature of the *immram* goals, even if the *Terra Repromissionis* is not a place in which one can stay, since it is not possible to enter Paradise while living.

However, not only does the goal of the voyage in the *Navigatio* have a different weight from that found in the *immram*; additionally, the succession of island adventures is overlaid with a new structure, for the great church festivals are repeatedly celebrated by Brendan and his monks at the same places: communion on Maundy Thursday on the Island of Sheep, Easter night on the Fish Island, the time between Easter and Whitsun on the Island of Birds, or Christmas on the Island of Ailbe. And this takes seven years, so that the voyage goes round in a circle seven times. This is clearly a symbolic reshaping of the type found in the *immram*. One could think, for instance, of a voyage through life via the seven ages; but in any case it is a voyage through good and bad experiences in life, a voyage which, however, is related to and anchored in the festivals of the church year, which reflect salvation history. The reaching of the goal, too, the Land of Promise, is symbolic in meaning, representing the transition from life to eternity. For no sooner has he reached it than Brendan returns home to die. This reshaping also has an effect on the figure of the hero: Brendan is no longer the *immram* hero surprisingly confronted with the island adventures; rather, in his superior wisdom he can comprehend all the situations that occur

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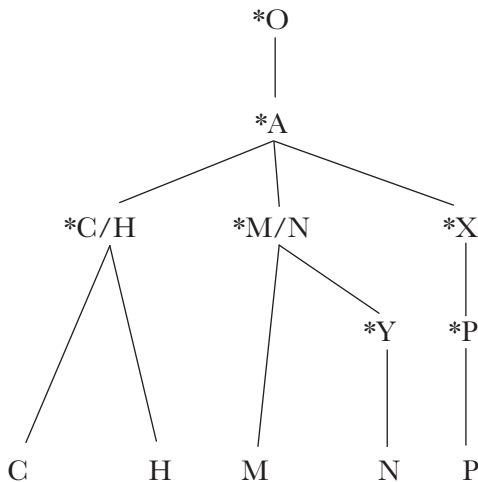
the *Navigatio* is not conclusive if one considers its function in either case. In the *Mael Dúin* three latecomers are taken on board against the advice of a druid, and for this reason they cannot reach their goal before the supernumeraries have disappeared. In the *Navigatio* the motif has no function regarding the course of the voyage. See the discussion and the convincing conclusion by Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 149–65.

<sup>16</sup> See Zimmer, 'Keltische Beiträge', 146.

and is able to take preventive measures. The overwhelming unknown does not exist for him. Everything is in the service of a voyage that is finally borne by Christian faith through life on earth to the Heavenly goal. This shows the *immram* concept, with its succession of episodes, to be something fascinating in itself, even though, of course, the *Navigatio* profits from this in terms of narrative.

We now turn to the Dutch/German *Reise*. Whereas, in the *Navigatio* tradition, the concept described was preserved through the centuries, in the case of the *Reise* a fundamental reshaping of the legend took place, with varying accentuations. In order to understand what happened here, it is necessary first to recall the situation of the textual tradition. The presumed Middle Frankish original dating from the later twelfth century has not survived. What we have are five versions that can be assigned to three redactions which, with considerable mutual deviations and, according to the standard view, independently of one another, point back to a common archetype. There results a tripartite stemma (see below Stemma I). Here I follow the *communis opinio*, which has been supported by Clara Strijbosch in a critical discussion,<sup>17</sup> permitting myself a further differentiation through intermediate stages, which I will explain in what follows.

Stemma I



<sup>17</sup> See Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 4–11.

\*O stands for the lost original dating from the twelfth century. \*A represents the archetype of the three redactions in the third row. The extant texts are in the bottom row. We thus find three branches of the tradition. These are: (1) Branch \*C/H, a Middle Dutch verse narrative which has been preserved in two manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth century respectively (C and H) containing differences in detail,<sup>18</sup> (2) Branch \*M/N, a German version, also rhyming, preserved in a Middle German (M)<sup>19</sup> and a Low German form (N)<sup>20</sup> from the fourteenth century (here I give \*Y for the Middle German predecessor of the Low German version), and (3) Branch \*X: the predecessor in verse of version \*P rendered into prose, from which derive the five manuscripts preserved from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, together with numerous prints combined under the siglum P.<sup>21</sup>

Compared with \*C/H and \*P, \*M/N are abridged, which is not to say that original features are not occasionally better preserved than elsewhere. The Middle Dutch branch and P are frequently very close to one another, that is, \*X must have been quite faithful to the archetype, without, however, keeping to the original throughout.

As to the original stock of episodes and their sequence, Clara Strijbosch has attempted a reconstruction proceeding from the above tripartite stemma and claiming those episodes for the poem of the twelfth century and their placing that appear in at least two of the

<sup>18</sup> *Van Sente Brendane, naar het Combursche en het Hulthemsche Handschrift*, ed. Ernst Bonebakker, Amsterdam 1894; C: *De Reis van Sint Brandaan. Een reisverhaal uit de twaalfde eeuw*, ed. W. P. Gerritsen and Soetje Oppenhuis de Jong, transl. Willem Wilmink, Amsterdam 1994. On further editions, see Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan*, 61–66.

<sup>19</sup> *Sanct Brandan. Ein lateinischer und drei deutsche Texte*, ed. Carl Schröder, Erlangen 1871, 49–123.

<sup>20</sup> Torsten Dahlberg, *Brandaniana. Kritische Bemerkungen zu den Untersuchungen über die deutschen und niederländischen Brandan-Versionen der sog. Reise-Klasse. Mit komplettierendem Material und einer Neuausgabe des ostfälischen Gedichtes*, Göteborg 1958, 106–40 (Göteborg Germanistische Forschungen, 4).

<sup>21</sup> Schröder, *Sanct Brandan*, 161–96. On the prints: Wilhelm Meyer, *Die Überlieferung der Deutschen Brandanlegende. I. Der Prosatext*, Diss. Göttingen 1918, 55–98; on the manuscript tradition: 99–113; K. F. Freudenthal, 'Ein Beitrag zur Brandanforschung. Das Abhängigkeitsverhältnis der Prosatexte', *Niederdeutsche Mitteilungen*, 28 (1972), 78–92; *Sankt Brandan. Zwei frühneuhochdeutsche Prosafassungen. Der erste Augsburger Druck von Anton Sorg (um 1476) und Die Brandan-Legende aus Gabriel Rollenhagens 'Vier Büchern Indianischer Reisen'*, ed. Rolf D. Fay, Stuttgart 1985, X–XII. Not taken account of in the stemmata in Freudenthal and Fay is: Reinhard Hahn, 'Ein neuer Zeuge der oberdeutschen Redaktion von Brandans Reise (P)', *Daphnis*, 27 (1998), 231–61. On the editions see also Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan*, 61–67.

branches of the tradition.<sup>22</sup> Of the thirty-five episodes preserved, thirty-two are attributed to the original, together with the prologue and the epilogue.<sup>23</sup> This conclusion is by and large convincing, but some questions remain open, as will be shown.

What is the relation of the Middle Frankish *Reise* to the *Navigatio*? Correspondences can be found in the *Navigatio* with about half of the episodes in the *Reise*, but the sequence is completely altered, and an equal number of new island adventures from the most varied sources has been added. Particularly striking is a strong addition of motifs from the vision tradition. This includes an island with thirsting souls and another with burning seabirds; Brendan looks into Hell and Heaven; he sees how Michael fights with devils for the souls of the dead. These vision motifs, which are incorporated in the sea voyage—it should be noted, however, that no overall picture of a visionary cosmos with Hell, Purgatory and Heaven results—shift the character of the *Reise*, compared with the *immram* type, strongly into the field of the spiritual. On the other hand, however, new *immram* motifs also appear, that is, motifs that are to be found in the *Immram Máel Dúin* or the *Immram Ua Corra* but are lacking in the *Navigatio*.<sup>24</sup>

This state of affairs makes it questionable whether the *Navigatio* that has survived was available to the author of the *Reise*. Might he have used a preliminary stage of the *Navigatio* that still contained *immram* motifs that were later excluded? There is, however, no written trace of such a *Proto-Navigatio*. One would tend rather to assume that the author of the Middle Frankish *Reise* acquired the Brendan legend, at whatever level, orally, and that he also had access from oral sources to further *immram* material.

However that may be, more important than such conjectures regarding the genesis is the new concept to which the author of the *Reise* subjected the Irish abbot's sea voyage. The pattern imposed upon the Christian voyage through life by the sevenfold tour with a view to the calendar of church festivals is lacking. Instead, a new occasion and goal of the voyage are invented.

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<sup>22</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 12–26. The scheme on p. 13 provides a survey at a glance.

<sup>23</sup> Strijbosch's scheme, *ibid.*, contains three double numbers (25a and b, 28a and b, 31a and b), so that, together with the prologue and the epilogue, there are in fact 37 narrative sections.

<sup>24</sup> See Haug, 'Vom Imram', 394.

The new concept is usually sketched as follows. Brendan reads a book about God's marvels in the world and finds it so unbelievable that in a rage he throws it into the fire. Then an angel appears<sup>25</sup> and commands him to set off to see with his own eyes what he found unbelievable, to record it and thus replace the burned book. So he goes to sea together with a company of monks and sails from island to island, sees everything he had not believed in and has it recorded in writing. When he has seen it all, he returns home with the new book, whereupon God summons him to Himself in eternity.

This abstract, which is commonly used by the interpreters of the *Dutch/German Reise*, is misleading in so far as it ignores the differences between the various versions, which on closer inspection raise a number of problems.<sup>26</sup> In the Middle Dutch version and in M, on the one hand, we are first told that Brendan reads a number of books in which he finds unbelievable marvels, until he finally throws the last of these books in the fire. The Low German version and the prose version, on the other hand, speak of only one book, the one that is then also burnt. More striking still, only in the Low German version does Brendan receive the explicit instruction to write the burnt book anew.<sup>27</sup> In the other versions, he is only required to set

<sup>25</sup> Here C, N and P are in agreement. In M, on the other hand, it is the voice of God Himself that gives the command. (H is not involved, as in this MS the beginning is missing.)

<sup>26</sup> Here I must direct criticism in the first place against myself: *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd. ed., Berlin and New York 1977–1999, 10 vols., here vol. 1, col. 989.

<sup>27</sup> Hannes Kästner, 'Der zweifelnde Abt und die *Mirabilia descripta*. Buchwissen, Erfahrung und Inspiration in den Reiseversionen der Brandan-Legende', in: *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Xenia von Ertzdorff and Dieter Neukirch, Amsterdam and Atlanta 1992 (Chloe. Beihefte zum Daphnis, 13), 388–416, here p. 395, transfers the divine command to replace the burnt book without further ado to M. Haupt, 'Welterkundung in der Schrift' 323, writes: 'Brandan [sucht] in selzēnen bûchen (vs. 22) Nachrichten über die wunder Gottes (vs. 231). Was er da liest, erscheint ihm jedoch so unglaublich, daß er vor Zorn das Buch (!) verbrennt'. With the exclamation mark, she thus calls attention to a problem, but does not pursue it further. Then she points out correctly that Brendan must set out to see the marvels that he doubts for himself, but adds without hesitation: 'Das Buch, das Brandan ins Feuer geworfen hatte, schreibt er während der Reise neu.' Ingrid Kasten, 'Brandans Buch', in: *Ir sult spreken willekomen. Grenzenlose Mediävistik. Festschrift für Helmut Birkhan*, ed. C. Tuczay a.o., Bern, Berlin etc. 1998, 49–60, here pp. 52ff., notes that only N mentions the command to write, but she too implicitly equates the recording of the 'Reisetagebuch' in the other versions with a divine mission. Clara Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 19ff., notes that N and P refer to one book, but C and M to several books, but she passes over the fact that only N mentions a command to write the burnt book anew; see also p. 245. In a recent study she



off to see with his own eyes that which appeared unbelievable to him; and when it is remarked in C (vs. 75; H is not applicable here, as the beginning is missing) and M (vs. 69) that he had to *gelden* the book, this of course only means that he had to atone for his misdeed, not that he had to replace the book. Nevertheless, it is also reported that Brendan causes the marvels he sees to be recorded in writing, and at the end it is stated (in C, H and M) that the monks carry the book on land from the ship, or that it is placed on the altar to the Virgin in the monastery chapel (according to P; C and H anticipate this in episode 31).<sup>28</sup> There is, however, no mention of this precisely in the low German version.<sup>29</sup>

If one does not, as is usual, contaminate these details, but takes account of the particularities of the different versions, two differing concepts for the *Reise* result. If, with the Middle Dutch and the Middle German versions, one assumes that Brendan reads of divine marvels in several books, there is no sense in demanding that he rewrite a book that has been burnt. In this case, then, he only has to set off to see the marvels he doubted, and when he has what he has seen written down, this has nothing to do with the restoration of the burnt book, but serves solely for the documentation of his voyage of atonement; as such it is consistently not put in the library, but placed on the altar in the chapel. Thus the function of the book is fulfilled in the sole fact of serving as witness that Brendan has carried out the punitive expedition imposed upon him.

It is a quite different matter if Brendan reads of all the marvels in a single book he then burns. Under this condition, it is reasonable that he be given the task of writing the book anew; this new

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sees the problem very clearly, but she does not solve it by distinguishing between different concepts: 'Ein Buch ist ein Buch ist ein Buch. Die Kreation der Wahrheit in "Sankt Brandans Reise"', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 131 (2002), 277–89.

<sup>28</sup> The counting of the episodes here and in the following is according to Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> These differences are, even when they are noted, in each case at once eliminated again in the sense of the contaminated abstract. One *exemplum* is: Peter Strohschneider, 'Der Abt, die Schrift und die Welt. Buchwissen, Erfahrungswissen und Erzählstrukturen in der Brandan-Legende', *Scientia Poetica*, 1 (1997), 1–34, notes pp. 13ff., that Brendan first reads of marvels in a number of books, but then burns only one book, and he does not fail to notice (p. 15, note 82) that the command to restore the book appears only in N; in the following, however, he repeatedly talks only of the one burnt book, and in the record of the marvels experienced he sees throughout the intention of replacing this book; cf. esp. pp. 15–17 and 19.

book is then not a form of documentation for the atonement voyage, but rather it replaces the destroyed marvel book. So it is perhaps no accident that at the end of the Low German version it is not stated that the book is deposited in the chapel.

Is it possible to decide which the original concept was? The narrative emphasis provided by the Low German version is, in its stringency, more convincing and of greater narrative fascination; but since it is opposed by C and M, and the prose version, while mentioning only one book, knows nothing of such a task, one must conclude in view of the stemma that it is secondary, that is, presumably came about through revision at stage \*Y. However that may be, it has to be acknowledged that the *Reise* exists in two different concepts, and that interpretations have to take account of this—something which has hitherto been neglected.

How is the first concept, that is, C/(H), M, to be interpreted? If, in this first concept, an indeterminate number of books is mentioned in which Brendan finds an account of divine marvels, his sea voyage, as was stated, is aimed at a verification of the unbelievable things of which he has read. It is hard to say whether Brendan's reading about marvels alludes to any concrete texts. Medieval encyclopedias have been suggested, which do contain plenty of *mirabilia*,<sup>30</sup> but it seems more likely that it is a fiction open to possible references. If one consults the source material, which Clara Strijbosch has comprehensively examined,<sup>31</sup> it appears that correspondences can be demonstrated in the most varied literary types to almost all the *Brendan* motifs, with the majority of the episodes, however, deriving from the *immram* tradition and the vision tradition. In the former case, one should by the way in many cases speak rather of ethnographical curiosities than divine marvels, though Middle High German *wunder* covers both.

What is the aim of such a voyage for the purpose of the verification of the unbelievable? One may be inclined to agree with the thesis of Hannes Kästner that it may have been a justification of the Christian belief in marvels in general, or even in particular an apologia for the *Navigatio*, which is known not to have been without its

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<sup>30</sup> Kästner, 'Der zweifelnde Abt', 400; Haupt, 'Welterkundung in der Schrift', 325–27.

<sup>31</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 61–244.

opponents—including the polemic dictum: When the Irish get drunk, their imagination runs away with them.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, it may be stated that the *Reise* is not content to confront Brendan with the most incredible marvels, which he was to register, as it were, as a neutral observer, but rather also depicts how the seafarers react to what they encounter. That is, the abbot and his monks have experiences in which they not only gratefully accept friendly behaviour and avoid hostile behaviour, as is the case with the *immrama* heroes, but in which drastic dangers and dramatic complications can also occur.

The significance of this perspective of experience becomes immediately clear if one enquires after the weighting from the standpoint of narrative interest. Not only are about half of the episodes spiritually accented, thus providing experiences that end up affecting the seafarers personally: scenes from Hell and Purgatory, encounters with figures of penitents and hermits, happiness or fear in the face of paradise-like or devilish islands, but precisely in this sphere the depictions are often particularly extensive. Thus, for instance, the encounter with Judas, who is allowed a respite from his torments in Hell each Saturday night until Sunday on a hot and cold rock in the sea, occupies 157 verses in M, and the account of the island with the neutral angels and their fate 105 verses, whereas classical seafaring episodes, so to speak, such as the magnetic mountain with the Liver Sea, or the encounter with a siren, are dismissed in a mere twenty-one and eleven verses respectively. The most extensive description is, by the way, that of the edge of the world situation at the end, with which the seafarers reach their destination.

Greater narrative length means an increase in sympathetic interest. In one particularly dramatic case, even the usual episodic structure is abandoned in the scenes in which one of Brendan's monks is lost but finally saved (episodes 13, 15, 18 and 19). After a voyage through darkness on a torrential river, Brendan and his monks reach a golden chamber with pillars of precious stones, in front of which is a fourfold fountain from which flow milk, wine, oil and honey. Five hundred seats await them; the roof is made of peacock

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<sup>32</sup> Kästner, 'Der zweifelnde Abt', 403ff. This apologetic function is the point of view from which Wim van Anrooij tries to interpret the restitution of the burnt book in the Dutch/German *Reise*: 'Het reisjournaal van Sint Brandaan, het publiek en de waarheid', *Spiegel der letteren*, 40 (1998), 245–80.

feathers. Then one of the monks steals a bridle, whereupon Brendan sets off again with his men. After another monk has remained on a paradise island, and they have returned by the dark river, a devil appears along with an infernal crew and takes the bridle thief with him. Now the seafarers beg God for mercy, until the devil is forced to bring the thief back. However, this in turn has consequences when, later on, they come to the devil's island. A black man appears and accuses Brendan of cheating Hell, particularly by unjustifiably snatching the bridle thief from its grasp. He, meanwhile, perspiring with fear, has crept under a bench. The black man throws a lump of burning matter at the ship, but misses. Then the devils come in droves and throw firebrands that fall on the monks like a shower of rain. However, God protects them and they sail away hastily. In the process, Brendan loses his hood. When he notices this, he gives the command to turn back. The monks protest and the bridle thief tries to press one of his hoods on Brendan to stop him, but the latter will not tolerate the idea that a devil might don his hood! When the devils see the ship returning, they are frightened, and when Brendan recites a psalm they flee. Thus he regains his hood.

Here, then, we have an action that runs, with interruptions by intermediate episodes, through a number of stages, culminating in the deliciously humorous scene with the lost hood—which by the way is the only one in which there appears to be no parallel in the narrative tradition.<sup>33</sup> This sequence of scenes involving the bridle thief, in particular, illustrates how what is encountered is no longer simply accepted for good or ill, but the Brendan of the *Reise* repeatedly reacts much more actively than his predecessor in the *Navigatio* or in the *immrama*. For instance, he also gets Judas an extra night off from Hell by determinedly confronting the devils when they come to take the damned back to Hell on Sunday. This has nothing to do with the verification of marvels read about, but is rather an unfolding of independent dramatic scenes in which Brendan has to assert himself and in which he does not only witness God's marvels but also experiences the power of God, who comes to his aid in his personal need. And, to the extent to which Brendan is obliged to

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<sup>33</sup> At any rate, Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, does not remark on this. On the question whether the episode missing in C and H belongs to the original stock, *ibid.*, 271.

cope with what he encounters, he also changes.<sup>34</sup> He recognises in the marvels the omnipotence of God and trusts in it in times of crisis. In contrast to the *immram* heroes and also to the Brendan of the *Navigatio*, Brendan is not the same on his return as he was when he set off, but has undergone a process of experience. Thus the original or alleged goal of the sea voyage is transcended, and the mere verification of marvels in a series of episodes is transformed into a fictional action in which the resolve and courage of the Irish abbot, the power of faith, and trust in God are tested, and finally the limits of what is achievable are shown.

This is illustrated in particular by an episode that appears distinctly curious in the context of the verification of marvels. Towards the end of the voyage, the abbot and his monks come across a little man who is floating on a leaf in the sea and dipping a stylus into the water, in order to let it drip into a tiny bowl. When the bowl is full, he empties it into the sea again. To Brendan's question as to what he is doing, he replies that he is measuring the sea. When the abbot tells him that this is an impossible enterprise, the little man replies that it is just as impossible as his goal of experiencing all of God's marvels. Brendan takes cognizance of this and goes on his way.

This episode is charming, but puzzling, in two ways. For one thing, one would expect Brendan to react in some way to the little man's lesson, for instance by questioning his own enterprise and turning round to return home. However, he appears not at all impressed, and returns home only after several further episodes.

Secondly, it should be noted—even if no-one has noticed this so far—that the episode does not fit the context at all. For Brendan did not set off to explore all the marvels of God presumptuously, but following an express command from above, and with the clear task of seeing the marvels he had doubted with his own eyes. These are also clearly limited in number, and at the end we are told expressly that they have seen everything and can now return home. So what is the point of the criticism that Brendan has undertaken something which, in its infinity, could never be realised?

One could choose a simple solution to the problem by arguing that, with the little man on a leaf, the author of the Middle Frankish

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<sup>34</sup> On this, Strohschneider, 'Der Abt, die Schrift und die Welt', comments appropriately, p. 18.

*Reise* picked up a current *exemplum*<sup>35</sup> and, without thinking rigorously, adapted it. This *exemplum* is most widespread in connection with the origin of St Augustine's *De Trinitate*: Augustine is walking on the seashore thinking about the mystery of the Trinity. He sees a small boy pouring seawater into a hollow in the sand with the aid of a shell. The Church Father asks the child what he is doing and he says he means to empty the ocean. When Augustine tells him that this is impossible, the child replies that it is more possible than for him to exhaust even a small part of the mystery of the Trinity in his book.

The first to report this legend of Augustine was Thomas of Cantimpré in his *Bonum universale de apibus* between 1256 and 1263, and from then on, with variations of detail, it appears very frequently in a long tradition from the *Sermones* of Jacobus de Voragine and a series of collections of exempla<sup>36</sup> via Hans Sachs,<sup>37</sup> Lope de Vega and Angelus Silesius up to Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. There is, it is true, agreement in hagiographical research that the connection of the story with Augustine is secondary.<sup>38</sup> The legend has also been told of other persons, at an earlier date; thus Caesarius von Heisterbach tells it of a nameless magister of Paris reflecting on the Trinity on the bank of the Seine.<sup>39</sup> Others who heard the boy's lesson included Lanfranc, Raynaldo d'Arezzo and Alanus of Lille.<sup>40</sup> The legend presumably owes its existence to monastic distrust of scholastic speculations.<sup>41</sup> According to the reference in the *Reise*, its origin should be dated to the twelfth century at the latest.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The best survey of the variants and the dissemination of the *exemplum* is provided by Roland Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken. Bilanz und Weiterführung der Forschung zu De Trinitate*, Habilitationsschrift, Bochum 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Henri-Irénée Marrou, 'Saint Augustin et l'ange. Une légende médiévale', in: *L'homme devant Dieu. Mélanges Henri de Lubac*, Paris 1964, vol. 2, 137–49, here pp. 140 and 143ff.

<sup>37</sup> See the *Repertorium der Sangsprüche und Meisterlieder des 12. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. H. Brunner and B. Wachinger, vol. 15, Tübingen 2002, 34, under 'Augustinus und das Kindlein', with two further, anonymous documents.

<sup>38</sup> Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken*, p. 273.

<sup>39</sup> Marrou, 'Saint Augustin et l'ange', 139.

<sup>40</sup> See Albert Wesselsky, ed., *Klaret und sein Glossator. Böhmisches Volks- und Mönchsmärlein im Mittelalter*, Brünn, Prag etc. 1936, 66–70, here pp. 67ff.; Marrou, 'Saint Augustin et l'ange', 142 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147; similarly Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken*, p. 275.

<sup>42</sup> On the question as to the oldest reference see *ibid.*, p. 274.

It can therefore be declared simply that the charming *exemplum* on the incomprehensibility of divine mysteries had reached the ears of the author of the Middle Frankish *Reise*, and he included it together with the large quantity of other material from the most various sources, without taking account of the contradictions involved.

However, it is striking that not only does the episode run counter to the context of meaning, but its position is the only one that is not fixed.<sup>43</sup> In M it appears in 29th place; in C and H it appears earlier, after episode 25b; and in N and P it is missing. This prompts the suspicion that the episode might not have belonged to the original stock of the *Reise* version, but has been added later, that is, at the stage of the archetype of our tradition, possibly on a loose sheet or as a marginal note, so that it could be inserted at various points. This hypothesis could also be supported by the facts of the tradition of the *exemplum*. As stated, it can be found elsewhere only from the thirteenth century onwards. The little man in the *Reise* would not then need to be used to vouch for an otherwise unavailable early history of the *exemplum* in the twelfth century; the episode in the *Reise* would rather be due to a tradition that only spread in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This would then also be the date of the archetype.

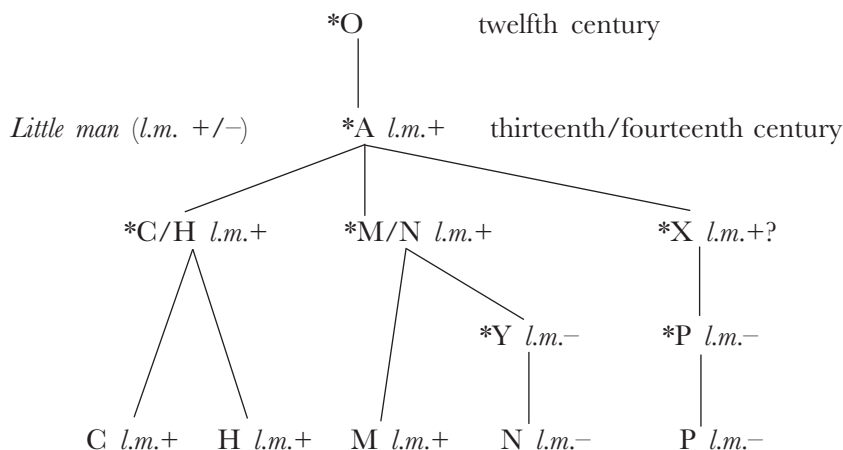
Four arguments, therefore, can be put forward for the hypothesis that the *exemplum* of the little man on a leaf did not belong to the original *Reise* of the twelfth century, but was inserted only at the stage of our archetype, probably in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. These are: (1) that the *exemplum* does not appear to be narratively integrated at all, that is, it has no effect and is therefore without function from a narrative point of view; (2) its position in our texts is not fixed; (3) that it fails to fit the context by not being compatible with a divine task, and (4) that the career of the *exemplum* is found elsewhere only from the thirteenth century onwards.

If we enter this hypothetical finding in our scheme, we obtain the picture sketched in Stemma II:

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<sup>43</sup> I pass over the postponement of the descent into Hell of the bridle thief in \*MN, which is clearly to be regarded as an error; see Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 258.

## Stemma II



The motif of the little man on a leaf thus persists from the archetype dating from the thirteenth/fourteenth century in branch C/H, while it remains preserved in branch M/N in M, but is lost on the way to N, and in branch P it is not certain whether it can be assumed at stage \*X; at any rate, it does not appear in the preserved P texts.

But the problem of this peculiar episode is still not fully disposed of by the reference to a possibly unconsidered addition on the level of the archetype. For it needs to be considered that the episode does seem to meet the tendency, mentioned above, not to be content with the merely neutral registering of marvels. For when, beyond this, the experience of the overwhelming power and ineffable greatness of God is involved, the *exemplum* could after all, in spite of the contradictions it conjures up, have a certain justification and a reasonable meaning.<sup>44</sup> So much for concept I.

<sup>44</sup> With regard to the episode of the little man on a leaf, I suggested earlier—see Haug, *Strukturen* [note 6], p. 402—reading the *Reise* in comparison with the *Alexanderroman*: both narratives represent attempts to appropriate the world for oneself by setting off for unknown regions, in the one case by conquest and in the other by exploration. And just as Alexander in the *Iter ad Paradisum* reaches the limit of his ability, the little man makes it clear to the seafaring abbot that his striving to experience all God's marvels is impossible. The same fundamental idea is behind both cases: mastering the world as an accumulation of conquests or explorations can never come to an end; the series of episodes as a structure of experience must finally aim at a radical change which makes precisely this conscious. Clara Strijbosch,



The concept represented by the Low German version appears quite different. In N we are no longer dealing with marvels from an indefinite number of books, but with the marvels in a single book, the one that was burnt. And we can have a good idea of the content of this, for it must in essentials have been identical with the book that Brendan causes to be written on his voyage, as only then is the demanded restoration of the book fulfilled. And this new book is of course not the extant text, because this is an account of the making of the new book. That is to say, in the concept of version N the levels are clearly distinguished which, according to the first concept, interpenetrate each other. According to the first concept, there is on the one hand the newly-written book as a registration of God's marvels: the punitive task allotted to the doubter. On the other hand, our text shows the transformation of the collection of marvels in a process of experience that in principle is to be thought of as open. By contrast, the new book in the Low German version is clearly closed, since what is involved is the restoration of a particular book, the one that was burnt. But in this case the *exemplum* of the little man on a leaf, with the reference to the impossibility of Brendan's mission, makes even less sense than in the other versions. Indeed it would blatantly contradict the divine command to have a quite concrete book with a limited number of marvels, to fit between the two covers, while *en route*. It therefore seems to me not inconceivable that N (that is of course not the rather clumsy author of the Low German version, but the author of his Middle German preliminary stage, \*X), realised that this episode could not possibly have been contained in the burnt book. This author must have understood it cannot be one of the marvels that Brendan was unwilling

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*Seafaring Saint*, 230ff., opposes this interpretation, pointing out that the critical episode is not placed, as in the *Alexanderroman*, at the end, so that there is no such change, indeed that Brendan does not react at all to the lesson. This criticism is justified. The point of Brendan's encounter with the little man on a leaf is—at least in the versions that have survived—wasted. It is true that the final episodes of the *Reise* are confusing and their meaning hard to perceive. Furthermore, the deviations between the various versions are particularly marked at this point. On these final episodes, which are only to be interpreted with difficulty, see Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 230–44; also Haupt, 'Welterkundung in der Schrift', 345ff. One has the impression that competing final episodes are juxtaposed. If the encounter with the little man is a later addition, the possibility has to be considered that it might have been intended as the final episode. This was, at any rate, the opinion of Maartje Draak, ed., *De Reis van Sinte Brandaan*, Amsterdam 1949, 212. This, however, would not remove the contradiction that this episode involves, but rather intensify it.

to believe and he will have consciously cancelled this mistake of the archetype. If these conclusions are correct, the preliminary stage of the Low German version, \*X, would gain a remarkably independent profile. For not only would it have very cleverly given the narrative a new point by the demand for the restoration of the burnt book, but would then have maintained this perspective consistently, that is, giving up the contradictory *exemplum* of the little man on a leaf.

The differentiation between two diverging concepts—C/H and M over against N<sup>45</sup>—thus above all affects the function of the book newly written on the voyage. If the burnt book is replaced by divine command, there is no justification for assuming that the new book should be different in character from the old one; it should in fact be identical with it.<sup>46</sup> If, on the other hand, the new book is only a documentation of the voyage of atonement, its content cannot be precisely determined. It might include not only facts but also experiences. But what is decisive—and this has hitherto not been properly recognised—is the fact that not only two (fictitious) books, the burnt one and the newly written one, are involved, but also a third, very real one, namely our text, the report on the writing of the new book, and it is this text in which the new element, to wit, the transmission of knowledge as a travel experience that brings about a change in the traveller, is included and conveyed to the reader.

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<sup>45</sup> The position of P is, as was stated, not to be judged with certainty. Although only one book is mentioned here, both the command to restore the burnt book and the *exemplum* of the little man are missing. The latter was probably a victim of abridgements in the course of the conversion into prose. It is, however, also possible that P goes back to a stage before the archetype of the versions \*C/H and \*M/N, in which the *exemplum* was not yet included.

<sup>46</sup> This is an objection to Strohschneider, 'Der Abt, der Schrift und die Welt', 27ff., who suggests that the burnt book provided an account of the Creation combined with an allegorical interpretation, replaced in the new book by empirical knowledge. This alleged difference is not supported by our texts.

## THE ISLAND OF THE BIRDS IN THE *NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI*<sup>1</sup>

Peter Christian Jacobsen

On their way to the Promised Land, the land the Lord has prepared for his saints from the beginning of the world, as a place of refuge when the great persecution finally overtakes Christendom, abbot Brendan and his monks arrive on Easter Sunday each year at the Island of the Birds. Here they stay until the octave of Pentecost. A moving little story is told in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* of their first visit to this island. This story is an important part of the concept of the work as whole, which at first glance seems to be a series of somewhat loosely connected episodes. At the same time, it is a good example of the style of the narrative, in which realistic descriptions of detail are mingled with fantastic events, the sources of which are hard to identify. It is a story filled with unexplained elements which remain open to the imagination.

The approach to the Island of the Birds takes place as often when the monks come to an island: They first look for a landing place, sometimes sailing round for three, or even as many as forty, days. Directions and details of the location may be given to provide an impression of precise geographical knowledge. The port may be only

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is intended to continue the interpretation of the *Navigatio* found in my article 'Die *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', in: *Beschreibung der Welt. Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*, ed. Xenja von Ertzdorff, Amsterdam 2000 (Chloe, Beihefte zum Daphnis, 11), 63–95. For literature in general see the bibliography at the end of this volume and G. S. Burgess and C. Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000. See also Renata A. Bartoli, *La Navigatio sancti Brendani e la sua fortuna nella cultura romanza dell'età di mezzo*, Fasano 1993, which contains an analysis of the episode on the Island of the Birds, pp. 139–42; Clara Strijbosch, *De bronnen van De reis van Sint Brandaan*, Hilversum 1995, about the Island of the Birds, pp. 234–37 and elsewhere, Reinhard Hahn and Christoph Fasbender, ed., *Brandan. Die mitteldeutsche 'Reise'-Fassung*, Heidelberg 2000 (Jenaer Germanistische Forschungen, NF 14), provided with lengthy bibliographies. The Latin text is that of the edition of C. Selmer, quoted by chapter, line and page. Some references are given to G. Orlandi's unpublished edition of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* (in preparation for the series *Per verba*, SISMEL—Edizione del Galluzzo, Firenze) that he kindly handed out to his listeners at Gargnano. Translations from the *Navigatio* and other Latin texts are my own.

a small entry point, no broader than the ship itself; on one occasion it is cut into the rocks. Here, on the Island of the Birds, they find the mouth of a little river, on which the boat is towed up to the river's source, perhaps to protect it from the tide—one mile up hill. Precise statements of number and measure are a means of creating a feeling of reality, but sometimes they are inconsistent.<sup>2</sup> The description of the landing is usually completed by a short, but specific description of the countryside. The first island they come to on their journey is *valde saxosa et alta*; its shore, exceedingly high, is like a wall, and brooklets descend from its summit: *viderunt ripam altissimam sicut murum et rivulos descendentes de summitate insule* (ch. 6, 14–15, p. 12). The 'Jasconius' island is an *insula petrosa sine ulla herba. Silva rara erat ibi, et in litore illius nihil de arena fuit* (ch. 10, 5–6, p. 20). On one occasion they find an island that is a wondrous plain, so flat that it seemed to be level with the sea, without trees or anything that could be moved by the wind, large and covered with white and purple fruit, perhaps melons: *insula [. . .] mire planicie, in tantum ut illis videretur equalis mari, sine arboribus aut aliquid quod a vento moveretur. Valde enim erat spaciola, tamen cooperta scaltis albis et purpureis* (ch. 17, 12–15 pp. 49–50), and so on. The Island of the Birds the author describes as *herbosam valde et nemorosam plenamque floribus* (ch. 11, 4, p. 22).

At the spring the monks find a huge tree, astonishing in its height and circumference, completely covered with white birds. Seeing this, Brendan falls into deep thought, tormenting himself and calling insis-

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. twenty-four monks with their abbot lived in the Community of Ailbe, fed every day by twelve loaves of bread, sent from Heaven; when Brendan's monks arrived, the *annona* of the days was doubled. During their meal half of them were sitting *mixtim* [. . .] *per ordinem* with their guests, twelve monks of the monastery with 16 brothers of St Brendan, and two monks shared one loaf of bread (ch. 12, 46–48 p. 31): *Sedebant autem mixtim fratres cum hospitibus per ordinem, et inter duos fratres semper panis integer ponebatur*, and (57–61 p. 32): *Nos sumus hic viginti quattuor fratres. Omni die habemus duodecim panes ad nostram refectionem, inter duos singulos panes [. . .] in adventu vestro duplicem annonam habemus*. Nevertheless, the number of the guests has not been omitted (ch. 12, 126–29 p. 36): *Te enim oportet reverti [. . .] cum XIII fratribus tuis [. . .] Duo vero, qui supersunt, unus peregrinabitur [. . .] alter morte turpissima condemnabitur* ('You have to return [. . .] together with your fourteen brethren [. . .]. But those two, who are supernumerary: one of them will become a pilgrim [. . .] the other will be condemned to a most horrible death'). After leaving the Island of the Three Choirs, where the monks got a basketful of *scalte* as food for their journey, Brendan squeezed twelve ounces of juice from one of these large fruits and gave to each of his remaining fifteen monks one ounce, and in this way they lived for twelve days (ch. 17, 65–68 p. 53): *exprimitque unam ex illis, et attulit de suco libram unam, quam [. . .] dividens in duodecim uncias dedit unicuique singulam unciam. Ita per duodecim dies fratres reficiebantur de singulis scaltis*.

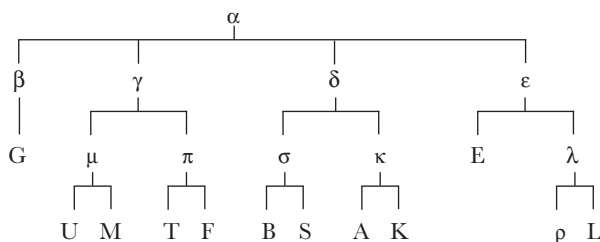
tently on the Lord to give him an explanation of what he can see—nowhere else in the *Navigatio* do we find such a scene. His prayer ends with a strange sentence (ch. 11, 26–27): *Non de meritis meis aut dignitate sed de immensa clementia tua presumo* (“I do this not because of my *merita* or my *dignitas*, but trusting in your infinite *clementia*”)—this is the reading of the text of the Ghent manuscript (G), adopted by Selmer. The verb *presumere de* (‘to trust in’) has often been used since late antiquity. The variant readings show that the scribes were in doubt about the meaning and tried to correct it:<sup>3</sup>

*non—presumo om. O*  
*non dignis meis meritis presumo, sed clemencie tue (-cia tua UP) MNCHUP*  
*non dignis meis meritis ponere presumo, sed de clemencia tua L*  
*non dignitatis aut meriti presumo, sed clemencie tue πSkR*  
*non dignitate aut ex meritis hoc scire presumo, sed dono clemencie tue B*

The most self-confident readings are those of MSS MNCHUP (= μ) and L, but *presumere* with the dative seems to be unknown elsewhere;

<sup>3</sup> The manuscripts quoted by Selmer are: A = Alençon, BM 14; B = Brussel, BR 9920–9931; C = Chicago, Newberry Library, 5 Ry 3; E = Épinal BM 147(67); F = Paris BN, lat. 3784; G = Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 401; H = Vatican City, BAV, Pal. Lat. 217; K = Paris BN, lat. 15076; L = London, BL, Add. 36736; M = München, BS, Clm 17740; N = München, BS, Clm 22248; O = Oxford, Bodl. Library, Laud. Misc. 410; P = Pommersfelden, Gräfl. Schönbr. Bibliothek, 51; Q = München, BS, Clm 17139; R = Vatican City, BAV Reg. Lat. 481; S = Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 111; T = Stuttgart, Württ. Landesbibliothek, cod. hist. 155 [olim 152]; U = München, BS Clm 29890 [olim 29061].

Selmer's stemma:



According to Selmer, Q depends on U, P and N on M, C and H on N; ρ = RO. In addition, he assumed several cases of contamination between the manuscripts of different branches. G. Orlandi, ‘Apografi e pseudo-apografi nella *Navigatio sancti Brendani* e altrove’, *Filologia Mediolatina*, 1 (1994), 1–35, determines the position of Montecassino, 152 and Milano Trivulz., 430 in Selmer’s stemma codicum. Furthermore see G. Orlandi, ‘Considerazioni sulla tradizione manoscritta della *Navigatio sancti Brendani*’, *Filologia Mediolatina. Studies in Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, 9 (2002), 51–75, where he studies inter alia three new manuscripts.

G, B and  $\pi$ SkR tone down in a different way,  $\pi$ SkR with a *genitivus relationis*,<sup>4</sup> unusual with *presumo*, it seems, while O omits the whole sentence. The terms *dignitas* and *merita* are often linked; *dignitas*, in its general sense or referring to an office, should be founded on *merita*.<sup>5</sup> The text of G, B and  $\pi$ SkR, therefore, cause no difficulty: the abbot does not ask for an answer because of his ecclesiastical dignity or because of some special merits.<sup>6</sup> There seems, however, to be something wrong with the formula *dignis meis meritis*, especially the word *meis*. One wonders whether the original text has been corrupted here, or was corrected in G, B and  $\pi$ SkR because it was felt to be in some way erroneous. But this opinion is not supported by the *stemma codicum*, established by Ludwig Bieler.

The answer to the abbot's prayer is reported by one of the birds. Its appearance on the stage, the *prora*, is described both precisely and poetically: we are told of the whizzing sound of the wings, like that of little bells, the stretching of its wings and the friendly look it gives the saint. In Exodus 28 the vestments of Aaron are listed, those he should wear when acting in *officio ministerii*. There should be a braid trimming around the *tunica* with ornaments like pomegranate and golden *tintinnabula* in turn, so that the sound could be heard when he entered the *sanctuarium* and when he went out, in *conspectu domini*.<sup>7</sup> The sound, like that of *tintinnabula*, indicated to the abbot a divine answer, so he was able to ask immediately (ch. 11, 33–34): *Si es nuntius Dei, narra mihi unde sint aves iste aut pro qua re illarum collectio hic sit*. The bird's speech has often been subject to interpretation, for there are some odd statements in it, which gave rise to the

<sup>4</sup> This text was adopted by G. Orlandi (see note 1).

<sup>5</sup> Gregory I therefore stated the loss of *dignitas*, if the *merita* were lost; the *meritum* depends on the obedience to the divine Word (S. Gregorii Magni *Expositiones In Canticum Canticorum, In librum primum Regum*, ed. P. Verbraken, Turnholti 1963 (CCSL, 144), *In librum I Regum* 6, 35, 807–09 p. 570): *Meritum quippe dignitatis est observatio divini verbi. Quod cum abicitur, quia meritum dignitatis amittitur, ipsa quoque dignitas amovetur*, and Hieronymus criticised Origen, who maintained, that the fallen angels remained angels (S. Hieronymi presbyteri Opera, pars 3, 1: *Contra Rufinum*, ed. P. Lardet, Turnholti 1982 (CCSL, 79), *Apologia c. Rufinum* 1, 23, 35–36, p. 23): *merita esse diversa et tamen in angelica omnes persistere dignitate*.

<sup>6</sup> See Tit. 3:5 *non ex operibus iustitiae quae fecimus nos, sed secundum suam misericordiam salvos nos fecit*. Similar formulae like *Quod nostris meritis non valemus* [...] are to be found elsewhere in liturgical texts.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 28:33–35: *Deorsum vero, ad pedes eiusdem tunicae, per circuitum quasi mala punica facies, ex hyacintho et purpura et cocco bis tincto, mixtis in medio tintinabulis* [...] *Et vestietur ea Aaron in officio ministerii, ut audiat sonitus quando ingreditur et egreditur sanctuarium in conspectu domini, et non moriatur*.

opinion, found in later medieval literature, that between the good and bad angels (i.e. the fallen angels) there existed neutral angels.<sup>8</sup> Let us have a look at the passage, in detail.

*Nos sumus de illa magna ruina antiqui hostis, sed non peccando in eorum consensu fuimus. Sed ubi fuimus creati, per lapsum illius cum suis satellitibus contigit et nostra ruina*<sup>9</sup> ('We are of that great fall of the old enemy, but without sin we were in consent with him [. . .]'). Surely the author was talking about Lucifer, the *antiquus hostis*, and the entire host of angels fallen with him; *sed non peccando in eorum consensu fuimus*—a very enigmatic statement, already disturbing to medieval readers, as is shown by the variant readings.

- β = G *sed non peccando in eorum consensu fuimus*
- μ = UM *sed non peccando consensimus.*
- π = F *sed non peccando aut consentiendo*  
T *sed non peccando aut consensu sumus*
- ε = OE *sed non peccandi eorum consensu fuimus* E/*sumus* O  
R *sed non peccandi eorum confessi sumus*  
L *sed non peccatis consensimus ipsius*
- σ = BS *sed non peccati eorum consentanei fuimus*
- κ = K *sed non peccatis eorum consensimus*  
A *namque mox ut simul creati sumus, peccando illius omnino non contradiximus.*

G has the text adopted by Selmer; its meaning is: *consentire in peccatum sine peccato*. This statement is, if it really is the original, in spite of some changes, preserved in μ, if we take *peccando* to be an *ablativus gerundii* instead of *peccantes*, while in π the sense is completely the reverse: neither sin nor consent to sin dragged the angels down into the depths. But this idea may also be deduced from μ, if *peccando* is taken for a *dativus*, with ellipsis of *eius* or *eorum*. The remaining manuscripts are in agreement with this, OE and R in a somewhat confused manner, but L quite clearly: *non peccatis ipsius consensimus*, and also σ and K. But this reading would indicate that the Lord banished these angels, even though they had done no wrong and

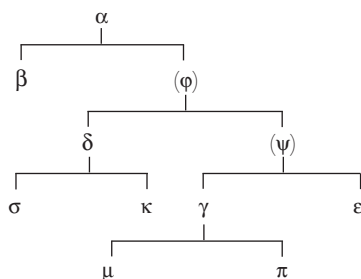
<sup>8</sup> Bruno Nardi, 'Gli angeli che non furon ribelli né fur fedeli a Dio', in: Bruno Nardi, *Dal "Convivio" alla "Commedia"*. *Sei saggi danteschi*, Roma 1960, 331–50; Marcel Dando, 'The Neutral Angels', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 217 (1980), 259–76; Clara Strijbosch, 'Himmel, Höllen und Paradiese in Sanct Brandans "Reise"', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 118 (1999), 50–68.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. Selmer ch. 11, 35–36, p. 24; G. Orlandi (see note 1) reads: *Nos sumus de illa magna ruina antiqui hostis, sed non peccando ei consensimus, sed ubi fuimus creati, per lapsum illius cum suis satellitibus contigit nostra ruina.*

not consented to Lucifer's rebellion—of course an injustice. So the redactor of A has tried to clear up the situation: *namque mox ut simul creati sumus peccando illius omnino non contradiximus*—they became guilty by their silence with respect to the crime committed by the other angels. It would be interesting to see the readings of the other manuscripts not recorded by Selmer. Ludwig Bieler, when reviewing Selmer's edition, proposed a correction to his stemma which he thought suitable in this case as well.<sup>10</sup> In his opinion the original text read: *non peccando consensimus*. In  $\phi$  the glosses *peccatis* and *eorum* were added; some of the later scribes accepted these glosses, correcting the text in a different way; some ignored them completely. According to Bieler, these various readings can be reduced to a second type of the sentence: *sed non peccatis eorum consensimus*. We cannot discuss this reconstruction here in detail, but in my view the confused tradition of the text should not be seen as a consequence of an unreflecting adoption of glosses, but as the result of consideration and doubts about the strange status of the angels.

Later on, in the *Vita secunda s. Brendani* (Charles Plummer edition), the question is resolved, seemingly in accordance with the doctrine of pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. In the heavenly hierarchy every *ordo* of the angels was subordinated to his superior *ordo*; so, according to the *Vita*, the angels still obeying Lucifer after his rebellion were only doing their duty to their superior:<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> L. Bieler, in: *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, N.S. 1 (1961), 164–169, here p.168:



<sup>11</sup> Ch. Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 2 vols., Oxford 1910, repr. Dublin, 1968, 1999, vol. 2, Appendix I A pp. 270–292, here ch. 20 p. 276. Another solution was attempted in the *Vita prima* ch. 26, ed. Plummer, vol. 2, pp. 114–15: '*Nos sumus,*' inquit, '*de illa magna ruina antiqui hostis, qui ad plenum ei non consensimus. Et quia ex parte peccato eius consensimus, contigit et nostra ruina.*' See the articles 'Engel 4 (christlich)' by J. Michl, in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 5, Stuttgart 1962, cols 109–200, here ch. 6, 2, col. 173 'PsDionysius', and 'Engel', in: *Theologische Real-*



*Angeli sumus, et cum illo de celo cecidimus, qui superbia propria devictus cum infinitis sociis ruinam passus est, quorum magister et pastor fuerat, quosque pro sapientia eius magna virtute Dei instruere tenebatur. Set superbia commotus, virtutem in vitium redigens, ex Lucifero Letifer dictus, Domini sui verbum contempsit. Nos autem postea ei, sicut et prius, paruimus; ideoque eiecti sumus. Set quia illius rei perpetratores non fuimus, virtute Dei penis non affligimur, sicut et illi qui secum superbia sunt commoti.*

(“We are angels, we fell down from Heaven together with him, who was defeated by his own loftiness. With an infinite host he suffered this fall, he who had been their master and shepherd and whose duty it was, because of his wisdom, to instruct them in the great virtue of the Lord. But, excited by arrogance, he changed virtue into vice, once called Bearer of Light, then Bearer of Death, despising the word of his Lord. We did obey him after that as before, therefore we were cast out. But since we were not guilty of doing evil, by the virtue of God we are not tormented like those who were excited by arrogance together with him.”)

Thus, in the language of feudalism, God was not the *dominus liguus ante omnes* to the heavenly host—the angels were not directly subordinated to him, they were mediated (‘mediatisiert’) by Lucifer. In the well-known Latin versification of the *Navigatio* from the twelfth century, which Bernhard Bischoff ascribed to Walter of Châtillon, the situation is settled in a similar way (st. 94, 4–96, 4):<sup>12</sup>

*‘Sumus’, inquit ‘angeli, sed non nunc ut pridem.*

*Sumus cum Lucifero lucidi creati,  
Cetus quidam subditus eius maiestati.  
Ei dum paruimus post ausum peccati,  
Cum ruente ruimus, set non eque strati.*

*Tumido servivimus, set non intumentes  
Non peccati complices, non hoc molientes.  
Hec nos reddit ratio stratos et plaudentes.  
Tali causa taliter sumus hic degentes.’*

(“We are angels,” said he, “but not as we were. Beings of light, we were created together with Lucifer, a band subordinated to his majesty. But because we did obey him still after his sinful rebellion, we fell

*enzyklopädie*, vol. 9 (Berlin and New York 1982), pp. 580–615, especially 591–92 (K. E. Grözinger).

<sup>12</sup> *Saints’ Lives by Walter of Châtillon. Brendan, Alexis, Thomas Becket*, ed. Carsten Wollin, Toronto 2002, p. 19, st. 94, 4–96, 4; see also Wollin’s contribution to this volume. Previous edition by Ernst Martin, ‘Die lateinische Übersetzung des altfranzösischen Gedichtes auf St. Brandan’, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, N.F. 16 (1873), 289–322.

down with him who fell, but were not shattered like him. We served a swollen one without swelling up ourselves, we were not accomplices of his sin, we did not do that: therefore we are thrown down and are praising, nevertheless. That's the reason that we are living this way.)

The angels served Lucifer, as they were obliged to do, even after his crime, and consequently fell with him, though they themselves were not guilty of *superbia*. Therefore, they were suppressed, but went on praising God—*stratos et plaudentes*.

At the same time, in manuscript A, as well as in the *Vitae* and the verses, another difficulty is removed. Most of the manuscripts of the *Navigatio* read (ch. 11, 36–37): *Sed ubi fuimus creati, per lapsum illius cum suis satellitibus contigit et nostra ruina*. From this it can be concluded that the angels were not all created at the same time. Generally, the angels are thought of as being created on the first day of the world by the words *Fiat lux*,<sup>13</sup> but they were surely created before Adam and Eve. The host of angels in the *Navigatio*, however, saw the light of day only when Lucifer and his satellites were already revolting; nothing more is said. Nevertheless, the new angels were not created to fill the gap caused by the expulsion of the others. The author of the verse text needs only a slight change to avoid this difficulty (st. 95, 1): *Sumus cum Lucifero lucidi creati*. The same is said in manuscript A by adding a single word, *ut simul creati sumus*, while in the *Vitae* nothing is said about this creation. But the Lord is just and truthful, *iustus et verax*, says the text. So his response to what the angels have done—whatever it might be—must be appropriate; they are exiled from Heaven, but not punished.<sup>14</sup> If their exile was correct,

<sup>13</sup> Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 11, 9, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, vol. 2, Turnholti 1955 (CCSL, 48), with the conclusion (9, 57–63, pp. 329–30): *Cum enim dixit Deus: Fiat lux, et facta est lux, si recte in hac luce creatio intellegitur angelorum, profecto facti sunt participes lucis aeternae, quod est ipsa incommutabilis sapientia Dei, per quam facta sunt omnia, quem dicimus unigenitum Dei filium; ut ea luce inluminati, qua creati, fierent lux et vocarentur dies* ('For, when God said: Let there be light, and there was light: if we are right to say that by that light the creation of the angels was designated, they really are made sharers of the eternal light, which is the unchangeable wisdom of God, whereby every thing is created—we call it the only begotten Son of God: so that they, illuminated by the light that created them, became light and were called 'day'). Augustine justifies his thesis by a sentence that the editor referred to Job 38: 7; see the article 'Engel', in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd ed., Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1959, vol. 3, cols 863–75, here col. 870, part 3, Systematik (R. Haubst).

<sup>14</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, ch. 11, 39–41 p. 24 (= G): *Penas non sustinemus. Hic presenciam Dei possumus videre, sed tantum alienavit nos a consorcio aliorum qui steterunt*. In R we find: *Penas non sustinemus quia hic presentiam Dei videmus, sed tantum* [. . .], in  $\mu$ : *Penas non sustinemus, per presenciam Dei possumus videre lumen, tantum* [. . .], in  $\pi$ : *Penas non*

they had necessarily committed some wrong, of their own free will or out of carelessness. Because they did not belong to the satellites of the old enemy, their crime must have been their *neglegentia* with regard to their Lord, as was already the view of the redactor of manuscript A. But the angels, though separated from the others, remained as angels of the Lord, although at a lower degree.

Gregory the Great, talking about the heavenly host, the *exercitus caeli* to the right and to the left of God, as described in III Kings 12, 19, argued that *a dextris* and *a sinistris* should not be taken in the literal sense of the words, but as a picture, meaning the *pars electa angelorum* and the *pars reproba angelorum*. Also the *pars reproba* serves the Lord. These angels help the sinner who desires to turn back and torment those who refuse to do penitence. They involve in sin those who are willing to sin, and drag them, against their will, to their punishment.<sup>15</sup> Though Brendan's angels do not fit into these clearly distinguished groups, Gregory's text is of some importance here.

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*sustinemus, presenciam Dei <non F> possumus videre, tantum [. . .]*. Most interesting is the text of A, in Selmer's apparatus miserabiliter divided into six readings: *Penas non sustinemus nisi quod presenciam Dei non videre possumus sicque misericorditer abalienavit nos a consorcio aliorum qui fuerunt superbi* ('we do not suffer torments unless we cannot see the Lord himself, and so he mercifully separated us from the community of those others who had become lofty'); (*fuerunt superbi* also in K). Close to this is the *Vita prima* (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 114): [*. . .*] *penas alias non sustinemus nisi quod presentiam Dei videre non possumus. Tantummodo enim alienavit nos a consorcio aliorum qui firmiter steterunt*. G. Orlandi (see note 1) seems to prefer the text of T( $\pi$ ).

<sup>15</sup> S. Gregorii Magni *Moralia in Iob*, ed. M. Adriaen, vol. 1, Turnholti 1979 (CCSL, 143), lib. 2/10, 38, 78–88, here p. 83: *Quid ergo est quod exercitus caeli a dextris et sinistris eius stare perhibetur? Deus enim qui ita est intra omnia ut etiam sit extra omnia, nec dextra nec sinistra concluditur. Sed dextra Dei angelorum pars electa, sinistra autem Dei pars angelorum reproba designatur. Non enim ministrant Deo solummodo boni qui adiuvent, sed etiam mali qui probent; non solum qui a culpa redeuntes sublevant, sed etiam qui redire nolentes gravent. Nec quod caeli exercitus dicitur, angelorum pars reproba in eo intellegi posse prohibetur. Quas enim suspendi in aere novimus, aves caeli nominamus [. . .]*; 102–04: *occulta iustitia licentia malignis spiritibus datur ut quos volentes in peccati laqueo strangulant, in peccati poenam etiam nolentes trahant* ('What does it mean that the heavenly host is told to stand to the right and to the left of God? He, who is within every thing as well as without, is not confined by the right or by the left. Yet by the right are designated those chosen by God, by the left those rejected by him. Not only the good angels serve the Lord assisting him, but the rejected, too, who test and raise up those who will return from sin and oppress those who are not willing to come back. That the talk there is about the host of the Heaven, does not hinder to find in it the rejected part of the angels: the birds known to rest in the air are usually called birds of the Heaven [. . .]; (102–04) The hidden justice gave leave to the wicked spirits to strangle by the noose of sin those who are willing and to drag them to punishment, also against their will'). This task of the *spiritus maligni* is exemplified in the *Navigatio* by two of the Late-coming Monks of Brendan; see the end of this paper.

According to him, the *pars reprobata angelorum* may be called *exercitus caeli*, similar to the birds we call *aves caeli*. He compares the two expressions *exercitus caeli* and *aves caeli*, but by so doing he is comparing the angels of the *pars reprobata* with birds, because the air is their domicile: *Quas enim suspendi in aere novimus, aves caeli nominamus*. Likewise, the angels of the *Navigatio* are inhabitants of the air (41–42): *Vagamur per diversas partes aeris et firmamenti et terrarum sicut alii spiritus qui mittuntur* (“we wander through various regions of the air and the firmament and the earth like other spirits that are sent out”). But what kind of spirits the bird is talking about and what may be their task are hidden in the mists of the sea. This is what the bird says about their identity; then it reveals to Brendan the next stages of their journey, as do other holy persons encountered by the monks; each time one stage is added. Thus the abbot is mainly able to announce to his brethren where they will be going or what will happen to them.<sup>16</sup>

The question of what sources gave rise to the fiction of the fallen angels on the Island of the Birds has frequently been asked, but little progress has been made. After Bruno Nardi, Marcel Dando in particular has dealt with the problem, and Clara Strijbosch has recently made a new attempt.<sup>17</sup> Dando was looking for evidence of the triad, good, bad and neutral angels, which in his opinion was to be found in the *Navigatio*. Roughly summed up, neither in the apocryphal works of the Old or the New Testament, nor in gnostic texts, did he see any appropriate doctrine; the gnostic triad of light, darkness and the pure Breath or Spirit between these two also seems to be too remote. The same result was derived from a study of the patristic literature of the Orient—I do not need to assess this. In the passages quoted by Dando from Greek and Latin patristic writers, the principal focus of the discussion is the story of the angels from Genesis, the *fili Dei*, who fell into sin when associating themselves with the *filiae hominum*, the daughters of Cain, generating the giants.<sup>18</sup> Another reason that could have caused the fall of Lucifer and his host was their unwillingness to adore Adam, the *imago Dei*,

<sup>16</sup> This is discussed in more detail in Jacobsen, ‘*Navigatio sancti Brendani*’, 82–83.

<sup>17</sup> Nardi ‘Gli angeli’, Dando ‘The Neutral Angels’, Strijbosch ‘Himmel’.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. 6: 1–4; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 15, 23, ed. Dombart and Kalb, vol. 2, pp. 488–92; *The Book of Enoch. Translation from Professor Dillmann’s Ethiopic Text*, by R. H. Charles, Oxford 1893. See also the articles ‘Gigant’ in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 10 (1978), cols 1247–76 (W. Speyer) and ‘Giganten’ in: *Paulys Real-*

as related in the *Vita Adae et Evae*.<sup>19</sup> A sentence in the *Stromata* of Clemens of Alexandria has already been noticed by Nardi; Clemens admonished a gnostic that, because of their *παθυμία*, their carelessness and indecisive doubts, some angels were 'hurled to earth'.<sup>20</sup> From Origen's *De principiis* Dando quoted two passages and he also discussed some of Origen's doctrines: that God created the world to give every *rationabilis natura* a rank and a task according to the *merita* they gained before being created, and that God, according to these *merita*, had created the different *ordines*, from the highest *ordo* of the angels, the cherubim and seraphim, down to the demons and Satan. Of all the texts cited by Dando that of Origen seemed to him the closest to the problematic sentences in the *Navigatio*. But he would not claim Origen's work as the source, because many authorities had denied that Origen's teachings were found in the early Irish church. 'The Celtic Church', he said, 'did not warm up to Origen's speculations and flights of fancy' (p. 273). This may be true in general, but it may also be questioned in particular,<sup>21</sup> especially if the *Navigatio*

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*Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, rev. ed. by Georg Wissowa, Wilhelm Kroll and K. Mittelhaus, Suppl. vol. 3, München 1918, cols 655–759 (Waser).

<sup>19</sup> Wilhelm Meyer, ed., *Vita Adae et Evae*, München 1879 (Abhandlungen der Königlich-Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, I. Cl., 14. Vol., 3. Abh.), §§ 13–16, pp. 41–42, and the new edition by J.-P. Petronelli, 'La vie d'Adam et Eve', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 56 (1998), 5–104.

<sup>20</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, vol. 3, ed. Otto Stählin, Leipzig 1909, 2nd ed. by L. Früchtel and U. Treu, Berlin 1970 (Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, nr. 17/2), *Stromata* 7, 7, 46, 6, p. 35, 1–4, translated by Nardi, 'Gli angeli' p. 338: 'Egli (il perfetto gnostico, cioè colui che possiede la perfezione della fede) sapeva bene come anche alcuni degli angeli caddero quaggiù sulla terra per fiacchezza (ὑπὸ ῥαθυμίας, *per socordiam*) per non essere stati sufficientemente capaci di liberarsi dalla disposizione al dubbio, sì da acquistare l'abito della perfetta gnosi'; Dando, p. 264, gives the English translation of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library: 'For he knows that some of the angels, through carelessness, were hurled to the earth, not having yet quite reached the state of oneness, by extricating themselves from the propensity to that of duality'; F. Andres, 'Die Engel- und Dämonenlehre des Klemens von Alexandrien', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte*, 34 (1926), 13–27, 129–140, 307–329, here p. 309, reported by C. Strijbosch ('Himmel' p. 59 n. 26), translated the sentence: 'Der Gnostiker weiß, daß einige von den Engeln infolge ihres Leichtsinns [hupo rathumias] zur Erde gefallen sind, da sie aus jener Befähigung, sich nach zwei Seiten zu entscheiden, sich noch nicht zu jenem einzigen vollkommenen Habitus entwickelt haben.' The 'Gnostiker' of Clemens is 'der vollkommene Mensch und Christ' (Andres, p. 15).

<sup>21</sup> Origenes, *Werke*, vol. 5: *DE PRINCIPIS* [ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ], ed. Paul Koetschau, Leipzig 1913 (Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, 22). Koetschau, pp. xcvi–c, noticed already that Iohannes Scotus (Eriugena) *De divisione naturae*, lib. 5 (J.-P. Migne, PL, 122, 928D–930D) quoted *De principiis* 3, 6,

was written on the Continent and perhaps not earlier than the tenth century. And whereas the *Stromata* were never translated from Greek into Latin,<sup>22</sup> at least until the later Middle Ages, and the allusion to the fall of some angels is brief and concerns nothing other than their well-known sexual intercourse with the daughters of Cain in Genesis 6,<sup>23</sup> Origen's *De principiis* came down to us only in the Latin translation of Rufinus, a translation heavily criticised by Hieronymus, who immediately made his own translation (now unfortunately lost). At least twenty-four manuscripts of the *De principiis* have been preserved, the earliest dating from the ninth and the tenth centuries, among them a codex from the tenth century, originating from the monastery of Saint-Arnulf in Metz in the Lorraine, where the earliest manuscripts of the *Navigatio* were written and where Selmer sought its author.<sup>24</sup> Origen taught that the *rationabiles naturae* had free will and could decide for or against God, who gave them their place according to their *merita*. So the evil-doing angels were not thrown into the depths all together, but were treated or punished differently. In his opinion there must be *ordines* of the demons as well as of the angels, from the angels up above to the archangels, the *dominationes*, *principatus* and so on, and down below from the demons to archdemons and so on. It seems easy to find a place on this scale for the angels

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2–5 (929A [...]) *audi magnum Originem, diligentissimum rerum inquisitorem* [...]); Josef Semmler, 'Navigatio Brendani', in: *Reisen in reale und mythische Ferne. Reiseliteratur in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed. Peter Wunderli, Düsseldorf 1993, 103–23, also referred to Origen and 'the patristic literature' as ancestors to the doctrine of fallen, but unpunished angels (p. 113, note 48): 'Diese Auffassung kannte bereits die Patristik, besonders Origenes, vgl. J. Michl, 'Engel'. in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, V, Stuttgart 1962, col. 193 und 198ff.', see furthermore col. 117; C. Selmer in his edition (*Navigatio*, p. 87) reported that Thomas Wright (*St. Patrick's Purgatory. An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell and Paradise, Current during the Middle Ages*, London 1844, 90) collected 'Extracts [...] relating to the distribution of the fallen angels, according to the degree in which they had participated in Lucifer's crime'. Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult this volume.

<sup>22</sup> See Albert Siegmund, *Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert*, München-Pasing 1939, Index, p. 285.

<sup>23</sup> There are only four short passages in the *Stromata* concerning the fall of the angels, quoted by Andres, 'Engel- und Dämonenlehre', pp. 308–09, who shows, that Clemens' constant concern is the story found in Genesis 6, where the angels decided of their own free will to prefer human beauty to divine splendour. So the text of Clemens can in no way be linked to the story of the *Navigatio*.

<sup>24</sup> Origen, *De principiis*, ed. Koetschau, pp. xxx–xxxii, the description of Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, cod. 225, tenth century (destroyed at the end of the Second World War), which possibly came from St. Vannes in Verdun, as A. Siegmund, 'Überlieferung', p. 120 suggested.

of the *Navigatio*. Concerning the reasons for the different treatments Origen states that it would depend on ourselves and our actions whether we were blessed and holy, or fell from salvation to malice and condemnation because of our slothfulness and carelessness: *Et per hoc consequens est in nobis esse atque in nostris motibus, ut vel beati et sancti simus, vel per desidiam et negligentiam ex beatitudine in malitiam perditionemque vergamus*<sup>25</sup>—*desidia* and *neglegentia*, these are the terms that seemed suitable to explain the fall of the bird-angels. Origen calls the fall *lapsus vel deminutio*—fall and decrease or diminishing of those that acted carelessly.<sup>26</sup> This means that *neglegentia* may only cause a *deminutio* of the full *beatitudo*. In this process of decrease as a consequence of *neglegentia*, all reasonable creatures, first bodiless and invisible, may little by little slide towards the inferior, and will, according to the quality of the places where they flow down, receive bodies, first, for instance, ethereal, then aerial. When they come near the earth, they will be surrounded by bodies of greater density and at last be bound to human flesh: *Cunctas rationabiles creaturas incorporales et invisibiles, si neglegentiores fuerint, paulatim ad inferiora labi et iuxta qualitates locorum, ad quae defluunt, adsumere sibi corpora, verbi gratia primum aetherea, deinde aërea, cumque ad viciniam terrae pervenerint, crassioribus corporibus circumdari, novissime humanis carnibus alligari*.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the question of whether Lucifer and our angels could be created on different days can be answered by Origen. God is unchanging; he is as he is and as he was from eternity and as he will be forever. So he did not begin one day to be Creator: he was always Creator and will always be Creator. Consequently, one may conclude that the possibility could not be denied that the Lord continued to create angels after the first day.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *De principiis* 1, 5, 5, ed. Koetschau, p. 78, p. 1–3.

<sup>26</sup> *De principiis* 1, 4, 1, ed. Koetschau, p. 63, 10–12: *Ut autem istam deminutionem vel lapsum eorum, qui se neglegentius egerint, ostendamus, etiam similitudine alicuius exempli uti non videtur absurdum.*

<sup>27</sup> *De principiis* 1, 4, 1, ed. Koetschau, p. 64, 9–13, a passage of Hieronymus' own translation in his invective *Contra Iohannem Hierosolimitanum* ch. 16 (PL 23, 384–85; S. Hieronimi presbyteri Opera 3,3: *Contra Iohannem*, ed. J.-L. Feiertag, CCLSL, 79A, Turnholt 1999, 26–27), inserted here in Rufin's text by Koetschau.

<sup>28</sup> *De principiis* 1, 4, 3 ed. Koetschau, pp. 65, 10 – 66, 4: *Hic est bonus deus et benignus omnium pater, simul et [...] bene faciendi virtus et creandi ac providendi. Quas virtutes dei absurdum simul et impium est putare vel ad momentum aliquod aliquando fuisse otiosas.* ('He is the good god and the gracious father and at the same time the virtue that does benefit and create and provide. It would be silly and ungodly to suppose, that these virtues ever but for a moment were idle'). See also *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*,



That a theologically educated reader of the Middle Ages could find traces of Origen in the *Navigatio* is shown by the known invective in Latin verses against Brendan's story. An early 13th-century manuscript has preserved the text. There the story is condemned as completely incredible and apocryphal. Concerning the Island of the Birds the author says:

*Hic fabellas addit plures non cessando fingere  
Demonas salvandos fore, laudes Deo solvere,  
Quod est nimis inimicum fidei catholicae:  
Recta quippe fides habet quod, ruente principe,  
Nullus nisi periturus secum posset ruere;  
Iste vero magne parti locum cedit venie,  
Origines omnes salvans dampnatur vesanie,  
Quem post mortem legimus percussum anathemate  
Quod sint libri eius tincti multiformi scismate.<sup>29</sup>*

(He adds a lot of stories and does not stop lying: that demons shall be saved, that they can praise God, which is quite contrary to the catholic faith. The orthodox faith maintains, if the prince falls down, every one who falls with him will perish. In opposition to that, he concedes to a great many of them a place of forgiveness: Origen, who tries to save everyone, is condemned because of his insanity; after his death—so we can read—he was excommunicated since his books are infected by various heresies.)

To this author all fallen angels are demons, condemned for ever and unable to praise God. *Demonas salvandos fore*: Origen was indeed convinced that after the Last Judgement every *natura rationalis* by its *merita* could change from one *ordo* to another. Even the fallen angel, through education and torments suffered over a long period of time, could ascend to a higher *gradus*: *unamquamque rationabilem naturam posse ab uno in alterum ordinem transeuntem per singulos in omnes et ab omnibus in singulos pervenire*.<sup>30</sup> In the *Navigatio* nothing is said about this possibility, but his critic, seemingly well acquainted with some of Origen's theories,<sup>31</sup> smells heresy in the invention of fallen, but not punished angels, who can still praise their Lord.

9, cols 593–94 about the date (first, second or fifth day of the first week) and the doctrine that angels every day are created anew.

<sup>29</sup> Ed. O. Meyer, *Romania*, 11 (1892), 378–79; C. Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 293–94, vss 24–32.

<sup>30</sup> Origen, *De principis*, 1, 6, 3, ed. Koetschau, p. 84, 17–19.

<sup>31</sup> His source may be the *Epistula ad Avitum* by Hieronymus (Hieronymus, *Epistularum*, pars 3, 1: *Epistulae*, 121–54, ed. Is. Hilberg, 2nd ed., Wien 1996 (CSEL 56, 1),



The chants of the birds, described in the next passage, follow the *cursus* of the daily canonical hours with special hymns for every hour. Their programme may be compared to the liturgy of the monks of Ailbe's family (ch. 12), and to the series of psalms sung on the Isle of the Three Choirs (ch. 19). As to Ailbe's monks, the author mentions their liturgy, but lays stress on the report concerning the *consuetudines* of their community.<sup>32</sup> On the miraculous island of the three ecstatic groups of men, who in turn sing psalms continuously day and night, he notices precisely the *initium* of each psalm and comments on their *consuetudines*, that is, on their movements on the field. Similarly, the office of the birds is described, but adapted to their nature. They beat their wings to accompany their song (ch. 15, 60–61). When Brendan came to the island for the second time, the speaking bird once more sat on the prow, stretching its wings, *strepi-tum faciens sicut sonitum organi magni* (ch. 15, 58). The birds do not sing a series of psalms like the monks, but only one *versiculus* of a psalm each time, which is repeated for the whole of an hour—like real birds patiently singing their short melody over and over again. In the evening, in order to welcome the monks, they sang the first verse of Ps. 64 (*iuxta lxx*): *Te decet hymnus, Deus in Syon*, and the melody and the beat of their wings sounded to Brendan like a sweet plaint. Later on, when they bade the monks farewell, they sang another verse from that psalm (Ps. 64, 6): *Exaudi nos Deus salutaris noster spes omnium finium terre et in mari longe*. It is a Psalmus David, a *Canticum Hieremiae et Aggei de verbo peregrinationis quando incipiebant proficisci*, or, in other manuscripts:<sup>33</sup> *Canticum Hieremiae et Ezechielis, populo transmigrationis cum inciperent exire*. Thus the birds were singing and praising God night and day, *in laude perenni*, we might say, similar to the ecstatic monks on the Isle of the Three Choirs.

Another long passage in ch. 11 (ll. 56–8 and 75–101) tells us how the procurator, that mysterious person living on one of the islands, takes care of them, bringing food and drink for their stay on the island and for their onward journey. The transition from the contemplation of the divine miracle to such an earthly matter is quite

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96–117, Epist. 124) which is a report to *De principiis* with many quotations from Hieronymus' own translation.

<sup>32</sup> Semmler, '*Navigatio*', 121–23.

<sup>33</sup> See *Biblia Sacra, iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Weber, 4th ed. by R. Gryson, Stuttgart 1994, p. 846.

abrupt. Brendan simply asks the monks to eat something: for their souls have had enough divine food for that day.<sup>34</sup> But the meals are poor; on the islands, the search for provisions often results in nothing but herbs and water, and sometimes the search is in vain; at sea, it is a life of hunger and thirst. Some examples found in different chapters of the *Navigatio* can be grouped together. When they start their pilgrimage, we hear (ch. 6, 9–10): *Reficiebant autem semper ad vesperam*—they had their meal every day in the evening. Some weeks later (ch. 8, 7), the *refectio* is reduced: *semper per biduanas reficientes*. After they have left the Island of the Birds (ch. 12, 3) we read: *semper per biduum aut triduum*. When, after Christmas, they have left the family of Ailbe, we find: *Reficiebant semper post triduum*—they had a meal every three days (ch. 14, 7). Thus, after a year on the sea, they have reached the timetable of refectio that seems to have been observed henceforth at sea. Poignant examples of ascetics who increasingly refused food are often to be found in early monastic literature, but also in later centuries, as is shown, for instance, by the story of the sanctification of Angilramnus, formerly archdeacon of Toul, in the *Vita* of John the abbot of Gorze in tenth-century Lorraine.<sup>35</sup> Here the passages concerning the refectio of Brendan's monks and their search for provisions bear witness to their asceticism, but additionally to the divine care for them, lasting for years. So, at the end of Brendan's journey, the hermit Paul could say that Brendan was more than an ordinary monk, who lives by the work of his hands, for God himself fed and clothed him and his monks for seven years.<sup>36</sup>

Becoming free from all the needs of this world opens up the way to the Lord. Talking about the human race, which he called the third *ordo* of the reasonable creatures, and about those spirits that God had judged able to complete the human race, which are the souls of mankind, Origen reported that some of them, in making advances (*per profectum*), ascended to higher degrees and were admitted even to the *ordo* of the angels. These are the sons of God and the sons of resurrection, or those who, longing for the light, have

<sup>34</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, ch. 11, 56–57, p. 25; cf. ch. 1, 91–92 p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Ed. G. H. Pertz, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores (in folio)*, vol. 4, Hannover 1841, repr. Stuttgart 1982, pp. 353–55, ch. 57–65.

<sup>36</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, ch. 26, 44–47 p. 73: *Et tu dicis in corde tuo non esse te dignum monachicum portare habitum, cum sis maior quam monachus. Monachus vero labore manuum suarum utitur et vestitur. Deus autem de suis secretis per septem annos pascit te cum tua familia et induit.*

left darkness and became sons of the light, or those who have mortified their earthly limbs and are able to transcend the uncertain and fragile motions of their souls as well as their physical nature and become spirits completely, joining themselves with God. Thus unified with him, they will finally become *perfecti spiritales*, recognising and understanding everything.<sup>37</sup> On the way to this status we meet Brendan and his monks; this status is the destination of their pilgrimage.<sup>38</sup> By their arrival at the Promised Land and the short stay on that island we find confirmation that in the process of sanctification they had achieved the ability to transcend their borders, to penetrate the wall of fog, to endure the infinite light and the presence of the Lord, like the angels on the Island of the Birds.

Now we must assess the importance of the episode for the story as a whole. Looking at the tree with all its birds, Brendan turned to the Lord with an ardent prayer, asking him to reveal the secret of the assembly; he was aware of meeting something important to his *profectus* on the way to the Promised Land. That he refused to insist on his *dignitas* and his *merita* may be seen as another echo of Origen's doctrine of the *merita*. Here, on the island called the Paradise of Birds, the *paradisus avium*, the monks meet angels, fallen angels. Later on, they will see Judas, the *infelicissimus*, the traitor: he too was fallen, but because of some little *merita* like the birds he was allowed to have a rest on Sundays and other holy days; but his *paradisus deliciarum* is a bleak rock within the stormy sea. Unable to praise the Lord, he only can look down into the depths, full of fear, for soon the demons will come back to drag him down to the torments of the weekdays. Brendan's monks sail between these two poles; they too are exiled, but have a destination. On their journey they meet

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<sup>37</sup> *De principiis*, 1, 8, 4, ed. Koetschau, pp. 101, 28–102, 8: *Tertius vero creaturae rationabilis ordo est eorum spirituum, qui ad humanum genus replendum apti iudicantur a deo, id est animae hominum, ex quibus per profectum etiam in illum angelorum ordinem quosdam vidimus assumi, illos videlicet, qui 'filii dei' facti fuerint vel 'filii resurrectionis', vel hi, qui derelinquentes tenebras dilexerunt lucem et facti fuerint 'filii lucis', [...] vel hi, qui mortificantes membra sua quae sunt super terram et transcendent non solum corpoream naturam, verum etiam animae ipsius ambiguos fragilesque motus 'adiunxerint se domino', facti ex integro spiritus, ut sint cum illo 'unus spiritus' semper, cum ipso singula quaeque discernentes, usquequo perveniant in hoc, ut perfecti effecti 'spiritales omnia discernant' [...].*

<sup>38</sup> According to this, it seems inappropriate to join the diverse statements about the direction of their journey and to reconstruct a certain route. As to the monks, the direction was quite unimportant since they knew from the beginning, that the journey would take them seven years and lead them every year on the holy days to the same places, whatever they would do.

examples of different levels (*gradus*) of punishment and sanctification, sanctification in a community or alone like Paul the Hermit, who lived on nothing but water for sixty years, truly a *spiritalis perfectus*. The possibilities within this spectrum are also illustrated by the three so-called late-coming monks, whose fate resembles a vision reported by Gregory the Great: once a *miles* saw a bridge across a dark stinking and steaming stream; the bridge acted as a test and could only be passed by just people whom it led to a lovely place with different houses. The soldier saw a certain ecclesiastic, who because of his sins fell into the stream and was heavily tormented. He saw an impeccable priest who crossed the bridge without difficulty, and another ecclesiastic whose foot had slipped down from the bridge: horrible ugly men emerged from the stream and pulled him down by his legs, while handsome men dressed in white tried to save him.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, one of the three late-coming monks<sup>40</sup> is dragged down by the demons to the infernal fire; the other, though a sinner, is saved by the prayers of his community; the third is allowed to become brother to those ecstatic monks, who praise their Lord without end.

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<sup>39</sup> Gregorii Magni, *Dialogi*, 4, 37, ed. U. Moricca, Roma 1924, p. 287. For the testing bridge see Th. Silverstein, *Visio sancti Pauli*, London 1935, pp. 77–78; A. Rüegg, *Die Jenseitsvorstellungen vor Dante und die übrigen literarischen Voraussetzungen der 'Divina Comedia'*, 2 vols, Einsiedeln and Köln 1945, vol. 1, 280–83; L. Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli. Wege und Wandlungen einer orientalischen Apokryphe im lateinischen Mittelalter, unter Einschluß der altschechischen und deutschsprachigen Textzeugen*, Diss. Erlangen 2003, 231–34.

<sup>40</sup> See Teresa Carp, 'The Three Late-Coming Monks. Tradition and Invention in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., 12 (1984), 127–42, here for instance p. 136: 'We have maintained [...] that the three monks represent an original figure triplicated into the aspects: good, good and evil both, and evil, respectively'. While the distinction between the three monks she made is quite reasonable, the theory of an archetype, an original figure triplicated (Jonah) in the *Navigatio*, is not in my opinion appropriate for the text.

THE *IRISH LIFE OF SAINT BRENDAN*:  
TEXTUAL HISTORY, STRUCTURE AND DATE

Séamus Mac Mathúna

The *Irish Life* of Saint Brendan comes down in two recensions, one unconfliated with the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* (NB), the other conflated. They have been designated as the *First Irish Life* and the *Second Irish Life* respectively. In the present work, I will employ these designations, and also some others which are well-known to scholars in the field.<sup>1</sup> Both recensions represent the same version up to the point where the *First Life* is conjoined with a fragment from *Fis Adomnán* ('The Vision of Adamnán').<sup>2</sup> Unlike the *Second Irish Life* and a number of versions of the *Latin Life* (S2, O, D and *Vita Anglie*), the *First Life* is not complete in that it does not present the later life of the saint.<sup>3</sup> It does, however, have the two voyages which are contained in some of the Latin versions.<sup>4</sup>

The structure and content of the *Irish Life*, and its relationship to the *Latin Life/Vita Brendani* (VB), to the *Navigatio* and to other voyage texts, have been the subject of much interest and enquiry over the years.<sup>5</sup> Whitley Stokes produced a good early edition and translation

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<sup>1</sup> See Glyn S. Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000. I sometimes refer to the *First Life* as the *Lismore Life* (L) or, by the Irish term, the *Betha*; I also refer to the *Second Life* as the *Brussels Life* (B).

<sup>2</sup> See below for discussion.

<sup>3</sup> For sigla of Latin MSS, see Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives. An Introduction to 'Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae'*, Oxford 1991, 747, Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*, 4–8. For the most part, Sharpe's revised terminology is used in this paper.

<sup>4</sup> The voyages are also contained in O and, very briefly, in S2, but not in the other Latin versions.

<sup>5</sup> Recent works which examine the relationships in some detail include Ioannes [= Giovanni] Orlandi, *Navigatio sancti Brendani. I. Introduzione*, Milano and Varese 1968; Walter Haug, 'Vom Imram zur Aventure-Fahrt. Zur Frage nach der Vorgeschichte der hochhöfischen Epenstruktur', *Wolfram-Studien*, 1 (1970), 264–98, repr. in W. Haug, *Strukturen als Schlüssel zur Welt. Kleine Schriften zur Erzählliteratur des Mittelalters*, Tübingen 1989, 379–408; Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure and Transmission of Early Irish Voyage Literature', in: *Text und Zeittiefe*, ed. H. L. C. Tristram, Tübingen 1994, 313–57; Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin 2000. Important earlier

of the unconfliated version as represented by the text of the *Book of Lismore*, and Charles Plummer did the same for the conflated recension.<sup>6</sup> Plummer also described the structure of the text and the nature of the conflation.<sup>7</sup>

Stokes was not aware of all the manuscripts containing the unconfliated *Life*. The Lismore text, which he edited, is clearly not the most complete copy of this version, a fact recognised by him in

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studies include those of Heinrich Zimmer, 'Keltische Beiträge. II. Brendans Meerfahrt', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur*, 33 (1889), 129–220, 257–338; Alfred Schulze, 'Zur Brendanlegende', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 30 (1906), 257–79; James F. Kenney, 'The Legend of St. Brendan', *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd series, 14 (1920), 51–67; James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland. An Introduction and Guide. I: Ecclesiastical*. New York 1929, 2nd ed. rev. by Ludwig Bieler, New York 1966, repr. Dublin 1966, repr. New York 1968, repr. Dublin 1978, 1993; Charles Plummer, 'Some New Light on the Brendan Legend', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 5 (1905), 124–41; Charles Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae. Partim hactenus ineditae ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum recognovit prolegomenis notis indicibus instruxit*, 2 vols, Oxford 1910, repr. 1968, repr. Dublin 1999; Charles Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn. Lives of Irish Saints, Edited from the Original MSS. with Introduction, Translations, Notes, Glossary and Indexes*, 2 vols, Oxford 1922, repr. London 1997; James Carney, rev. of *Navigatio sancti Brendani Abbatis*, ed. Carl Selmer, *Medium Aevum*, 32 (1963), 37–44; J. M. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage in Irish Literature and History. An Anthology of Criticism*, Dublin 2000, contains a reprint of a number of central works on the subject, together with some new material by the editor and others; W. R. J. Barron, and Glyn S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2002, revised version 2005, has an English translation of the Latin version of the *Navigatio* and of eight vernacular versions, together with a general introduction by Glyn Burgess which gives an outline of the *Life of Brendan*, and a commentary by Jonathan M. Wooding on the *Navigatio* and other relevant matters. See also B. Hillers, 'Voyages between Heaven and Hell: Navigating the Early Irish *Immram* Tales', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 13 (1993), 66–81, and the recent study by Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Subversion at Sea: Structure, Style and Intent in the *Immrama*', in: J. M. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage*, 194–225. For further references see Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*.

<sup>6</sup> Whitley Stokes, ed., *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore, edited with a translation, notes, and indices*, Oxford 1890 (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Mediaeval and Modern Series, part 5), 99–116, 247–61; Charles Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, 44–95; vol. 2, 44–92. See also Denis O'Donoghue, *Brendaniana. St Brendan the Voyager in Story and Legend*, Dublin 1893, who partially edited and translated the Lismore copy together with additions from the Paris/Egerton 91 copies and copious notes on the contents of the text. For other works on the subject, see Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*.

<sup>7</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, pp. xvi–xxv. I have also availed of an unpublished source on the nature and contents of the *Irish Life*, designated as 'Ó Riain, Notes' in the present paper. These are important notes and comments on the *Life* made by Professor Pádraig Ó Riain, in which he examines both versions of the *Irish Life*, collates with the various Latin recensions and provides a commentary. I am grateful to Professor Ó Riain who very kindly placed this work at my disposal.

the additions he made to it from the Paris manuscript. There are many poems in the latter manuscript, for example, which it shares with other copies, some of which were unknown to Stokes at the time of writing.<sup>8</sup>

More research is required on the transmission, structure and date of the *Life*. The manuscript tradition, for example, has not been properly examined by any of the scholars who edited the text, and both the omission of the latter part of the text in the *First Life*, and the structure of the conflated *Life*, need to be examined afresh. The aim of the present work is to make a contribution to these areas of enquiry.

### 1. *The Manuscript Tradition*

The *First Life* is contained in over twenty manuscript copies, including a number of translations into English, with witnesses in every century from the fifteenth to the end of the twentieth. This reflects the popularity and relevance of the *Life* up until recent times. As far as I can ascertain, this version is contained in the following manuscripts:<sup>9</sup>

1. London, BL, Egerton 91, ff. 26r–30v, pp. 55–64, written in the fifteenth century by Uilliam Mac an Lega, one of the most distinguished scribes of the time. Parts of columns 1 and 2 (p. 55) are badly defaced and there is also some damage to columns 5 and 6 (p. 57) and to columns 7 and 8 (p. 58). Fortunately, the text of the Paris copy, which is more or less identical with Egerton, is clearly legible in these places. At the end of the text are the words ‘*Finit Amen*’, followed by a space and then the sentence: *Is mirbuilech inte dorinne nem 7 talam 7 ifernn 7 na cethra duile 7 na .vii. n-airdreannaigh 7 linadh 7 traghadh na marann 7 gluasacht na n-uisceadh 7 soillsi lae 7 dorcacht aidchi* (‘Miraculous is the person who made Heaven and earth and Hell and the four elements and the seven

<sup>8</sup> Plummer’s statement that Egerton 91 is of little or no value is not well founded. His summary dismissal of some of the later copies was also, in hindsight, rather rash (Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉirenn*, vol. 1, xviii, note 4). O’Donoghue, *Brendaniana*, followed Stokes in basing his edition on the same manuscript versions, including Egerton 91.

<sup>9</sup> See also Mac Mathúna, ‘The Structure’, 321–25; Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*, 9–12.

planets and full tide and ebb tide of the seas and the flowing of the waters and the light of day and the darkness of night'). This comment, which seems to have been inspired by the great wonders related in the *Life*, fills out the verso column. The last few words have been touched up by a later hand.<sup>10</sup>

2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, celtique et basque 1 (celt. et b. 1), ff. 81v–87r, entitled '*Betha Bhrénaínd indso*'. This is a composite codex of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, written by various scribes, including Uilliam Mac an Lega, the scribe of Egerton 91 above, and his son Maelsheachlainn. The final colophon in Egerton 91 is not contained in this manuscript.<sup>11</sup>
3. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 L 11, pp. 285–96, written by Anthony O'Brien in 1780 and entitled '*Ag so do bheatha et do bhás d'imtheachtaibh 7 do miorbhuillibh Bhréanuinn naomhtha mic Fionnloga .i. easbog Ciarraige*'. There is a note at the end of the text on page 296, as follows: 'Finished by Anthony O'Brien September 25th 1780 at Innverin in the west of County Clare, and Parish of Dunaha, it being a wet morning'. It has been suggested that this manuscript may be a copy of Maynooth C 41 below. Notes on the side of the manuscript by one 'D. Cusack' are also found in C 41. The two texts of the *Betha* are identical, breaking off prematurely at l. 3559: '*agus ba háil leis a thír*' L; '*agus ba háil leis*' C 41. The words '*a thír*' are not legible in my copy of C 41.<sup>12</sup>
4. Maynooth, Co. Kildare, St Patrick's College, C 41, pp. 89–100, written in or around 1721 by Aindrias Mac Cruitín and entitled '*Ag so do bheatha et do bhás, d'imtheachtaibh et do miorbuillibh Bhréanuinn naomhtha mic Fionnlogha .i. easbog Chiarraige*'. There is a note on p. 3 to Éamonn Ó Maolruanaigh and his wife Seabhán which is dated 9.4.1721. The manuscript belongs to the O'Curry collection. The microfilm printout of the text which I have used is badly smudged in places. Fortunately, 23 L 11 provides a very clean copy. On the relationship with 23 L 11, see above.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, London 1926, 441–42.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 441–42.

<sup>12</sup> See Elizabeth FitzPatrick, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 14, 1714–16, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1935.

<sup>13</sup> P. Ó Fiannachta agus an tAthair P. Ó Maoileachlainn, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Cholaíste Phádraig Má Nuad*, vol. 5, 80, An Sagart, Má Nuad 1968. [P. Ó Fiannachta and Fr. P. Ó Maoileachlainn, (*Catalogue of*) *Irish Manuscripts in St Patrick's College*,



5. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, A iv 1 (formerly Stowe 9), pp. 175–204, written by Domhnall Ó Duinnín in 1627 in the Franciscan House at Cork for Proinsias Ó Mathghamhna (Francis O Mahony), provincial of the Irish Franciscans at the time. At a much later date, the manuscript was taken along with other MSS of Charles O Conor of Belanagare to the library of the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe in England. It was purchased by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1883 and placed in the Royal Irish Academy.<sup>14</sup>
6. London, BL Egerton 180, ff. 58r–69r, transcribed by Muiris Ó Gormáin from Royal Irish Academy A iv 1 above and entitled '*Beatha Breanainn*'. This transcript of our text and of the Stowe manuscript was probably made between 1780 and 1781 while the manuscript was in the possession of Charles O Conor of Belanagare, who had acquired it in 1766.<sup>15</sup>
7. *Book of Lismore*, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, formerly known as the Book of MacCarthy Reagh, ff. 30v–34v, a compilation of the late fifteenth century made by Aonghus Ó Callanáin and other scribes for Finghin Mac Carthaigh Riabhach (d. 1505), lord of Cairbre in Co. Cork. Contained in a wooden box, it was discovered in a walled-up doorway by workmen in Lismore Castle in 1814.<sup>16</sup>
8. Cambridge 1, McClean 187, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, ff. 29r–41r, written in 1640. This is identical with the *Lismore Life*.
9. Cambridge 2, Old University Library, Add. 4183, pp. 195–205, written in the nineteenth century by Peadar Ó Longáin. It is identical with the Lismore copy. It contains footnotes in which a number of contractions are expanded. At the end of the text—'*Finit de sin*'—there is a stanza, as follows:

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Maynooth, vol. 5, An Sagart, Maynooth]. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 78–80.

<sup>14</sup> Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 22, 2782, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1940. This volume of the catalogue is contained in Fasciculi 21–25. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 2780–83.

<sup>15</sup> Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*, vol. 2, 451.

<sup>16</sup> R. A. S. Macalister, *The Book of Mac Carthaigh Riabhach otherwise The Book of Lismore*, Dublin 1950 (Irish Manuscripts Commission Facsimiles, 5); Whitley Stokes, ed., *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, Oxford 1890.

Glé liomsa a choimhdhe gan chol,  
 betha bocht is bheith mh'aonor;  
 ro badh glé liomsa dom dheóin  
 iongnais mo chaemh is mo chineóil.<sup>17</sup>

10. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 24 C 6, pp. 1–22, written in 1844–45 by Éamonn Ó Mathghamhna at Blair's Castle (*Caisleán Bel-Aidhir*), Sunday's Well, Cork from the *Book of Lismore* for John Windele and entitled '*Beatha Brenainn mhic Fionnlogu*'.<sup>18</sup>
11. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 G 25, pp. 150–70, written by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>
12. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, F IV 2, pp. 55–59, written by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin at Upper Glanmire in 1816 and entitled '*Beatha Bhreanuinn mic Finnlogha*'.<sup>20</sup>
13. Maynooth, Co. Kildare, St Patrick's College, M 17, pp. 213–51, written by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin in Cork in 1817 and entitled '*Beatha Bhreanuinn mic Finnlogha annso*'. There is a colophon at the end of the text as follows: *Foircheann le beatha Breanainn go n-uige. Iarna tarrang a seinleabhar meambruim do bhí cruaidh cianaosta doighléighiti, chuim úsáidi Easboig Chorcaighe an tan so. San mbliadhain d'aois 1817 le Micheal Óg Ó Longáin, a cCorcaigh* ('End of the Life of Brendan up to this point. Taken from an old vellum manuscript which was difficult to understand, ancient and illegible, for the use of the Bishop of Cork at this time. In the year 1817 by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin, in Cork'). The manuscript is dated elsewhere 5.12.1817 (p. 341).<sup>21</sup> In golden letters on the outside cover of the leather binding of the MS are the words: 'Lismore Book: Irish MS: III: vol. 17: J. Murphy D. D.: 1820', and on the title page: *An Treas Leabhar do Leabhar Leasa Móir* ('The Third Book of the *Book of Lismore*').

<sup>17</sup> Translation of stanza: 'My choice is clear, O faultless Lord, a life of poverty and a life alone; I would definitely and willingly choose the absence of my friends and relations'.

<sup>18</sup> Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 6, 754, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1931. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 753–58.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 720. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 713–28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 769. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 768–69.

<sup>21</sup> P. Ó Fiannachta, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Cholaíste Phádraig Má Nuad*, vol. 4, 46, An Sagart, Má Nuad 1965/67.

14. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 H 6, pp. 72ff, transcribed by Joseph O'Longan from the *Book of Lismore* for the Royal Irish Academy in 1868.<sup>22</sup>
15. Maynooth, Co. Kildare, St Patrick's College, M 74, pp. 153–73, written by Tadhg Ó Conaill in 1818 at Sunday's Well, Cork ('*ag Tobar Rígh an Dómhnaigh*') and entitled '*Beatha Bhréanuinn mhic Fionnlogha*'. The beginning is as follows: '*Beatus vir [. . .] Is feacht-nach et is firén foirbhthe in fear forsa mbai eagladh et imúaman in Choímhdhia*'. Much of the MS in which it is contained was taken from the *Book of Lismore*. In gold letters on the outside cover of the manuscript are the words: 'Lives of Saints Irish M.S.: Vol. 74'.<sup>23</sup>
16. Maynooth, Co. Kildare, St Patrick's College, C 85, pp. 1–9, written in 1855. There is a note by Eugene O'Curry in different ink, dated 1857, as follows: 'Micheal O'Cleary's copy in Brussels contains many legends not in this'.<sup>24</sup>
17. St. Colman's College, Fermoy, CF 2, pp. 49ff. It was copied from the *Book of Lismore*, probably by Éamann Ua Mathghamhna at Sunday's Well in Cork in 1844–45 who transcribed the adjoining items in the manuscript at that time for Fr. Muiris Cindfeich.<sup>25</sup>
18. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 12 D 22, pp. 93–193, written in the nineteenth century and entitled '*Betha Brenainn meic Finnlogha*'. This is a transcription, written on alternate pages, of the *Irish Life* from the *Book of Lismore*, followed by a translation into English by John O'Donovan (pp. 194–245).<sup>26</sup>
19. Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 12 M 13, pp. 477–530 (Text 477–504; notes 509–27). This is an English translation of the *Irish Life* from the *Book of Lismore* made by John O'Donovan in

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<sup>22</sup> Winifred Wulff and Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 10, 1278, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1933. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 1278–84.

<sup>23</sup> P. Ó Fiannachta, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Cholaíste Phádraig Má Nuad*, vol. 3, 63, An Sagart, Má Nuad 1966. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 62–64.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 15, (1969).

<sup>25</sup> P. Ó Fiannachta, *Clár Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Leabharlanna na Cléire agus Mionchnuasaigh*, vol. 1, 62, Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath, Dublin 1980. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 61–63.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth FitzPatrick, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 21, 2620, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1940. The itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 2620–21. This volume of the catalogue is contained in Fasciculi 21–25.

1860. The title page reads: 'The Life of St Brendan, the Patron of Kerry. Translated by John O'Donovan Esq LLD from the original Irish in the 'Leabhar mc Carrtha Riabhach', now at Lismore castle, for the Ven. A. B. Rowan, Archdeacon of Ardfert, and copied for John Windele of Blair's Castle, Cork, 1860'. O'Donovan's notes are both copious and useful. He also translates a number of the poems.<sup>27</sup>
20. Maynooth, Co. Kildare, St Patrick's College, DR 2 (c), pp. 1–31. The *Life* was transcribed from the *Book of Lismore* by Mr W. M. Hennessey, Public Records Office, Dublin 'giving his readings of the contractions, shewn by the words and letters underlined and copied by me Denis O'Donoghue P. P., St Brendan's Ardfert. December 3 1879'. Collated with BL Egerton 91, it also contains historical notes in English.<sup>28</sup>
21. Cork, University College Library, T 34, written in 1879–80. It contains the translation made by John O'Donovan of the *Irish Life* in 1860 for the Ven. A. B. Rowan from the *Book of Lismore*, copied in this instance by P. W. Joyce.<sup>29</sup>

The *Second Irish Life* is contained in one manuscript only:

22. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België/Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 4190–4200, ff. 224r–63v, written by Micheál Ó Cléirigh in 1639. In a colophon at the end of the text, Ó Cléirigh says that he got the *Life* from a manuscript written by Sioghraidh Ó Maolchonaire in 1536: *I cconueint na mbrathar ag Drobaois ro aitsccriobhus an bhetha so Brenainn asan ccairt ro sccriobhus roimhe asan leabur do sccriobh Sioghraidh ua Maolconaire do Roisi ingin Aoda Duibh meic Aodha ruaid i Domhnaill, ben Neill óicc, meic Airt, meic Cuinn í Neill, i mbaile ann tSen-caislein do lettaoibh Sleibhe Truim. Aois Crist an tan sin, amail dherbus an scribneoir .i. 1536. Ocus aois Crist an tan sa 27 Marta, 1639. Meisi an brathair bocht, Michel ua Clerigh* ('In the convent of the Friars on the Drowse, I re-copied this Life of

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Elizabeth FitzPatrick, vol. 24, 3067. I am grateful to David Stifter for rechecking this reference for me.

<sup>28</sup> P. Ó Fiannachta, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Choláiste Phádraig Má Nuad*, vol. 6, 101, An Sagart, Má Nuad 1969. The full itemised description of the manuscript is at pp. 99–103.

<sup>29</sup> Pádraig de Brún, *Clár Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Choláiste Ollscoile Chorcaí: Cnuasach Thoma, Imleabhar 1: Clár*, 275, Coláiste Ollscoile Chorcaí, Cló Bhréanainn, Dublin 1967.

Brendan from the paper copy I had previously made from the book which Sioghraidh Ua Maolchonaire wrote for Rose, daughter of Aed Dubh, son of Aed Ruadh O'Donnell, wife of Niall Óg, son of Art, son of Conn O'Neill, in the *baile* of Sen-Caislen (Oldcastle) beside Sliabh Truim. The year of Christ (Our Lord) at that time, as the writer affirms, was 1536. And the year of Christ now is 27 March, 1639. I am the poor friar, Michael O'Clery'.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. *The Relationship Between the Manuscripts*

The manuscript copies of the *First Life* may be divided initially into four main groups, as follows: (1) Egerton 91 (E) and Paris, celtique et basque 1 (P); (2) RIA 23 L 11 (23 L) and Maynooth C 41 (C); (3) RIA A iv 1 (St) and Egerton 180 (Eg); (4) The *Book of Lismore* (L) and the manuscripts based on it, that is, 8–22 above. To these may be added that portion of the *Second Life* in Brussels 4190–4200 (B) which corresponds with the *First Life*, that is, from the beginning of the text up to the incorporation of the *Fis Adomnán* fragment (at L 3880, B § 151). At this point, the compiler of the *Second Life* (after § 151) moves to another source for the remainder of the *Life*, noting in passing that he is so doing: *Iste fabule sunt plux ad* [leg. plus ab] *alio libro* ('These additional stories are from another book').

Egerton 91 and the Paris manuscript copy are essentially identical, and are the only manuscripts to have an almost complete set of poems. They provide the fullest text.<sup>31</sup> The RIA manuscript 23 L 11 and the Maynooth C 41 are also more or less identical.<sup>32</sup> They are reasonably complete as far as they go, but unfortunately break off at line 3559 of L. Egerton 180 is a copy of Stowe. These two copies present a more modernised version of the *Life*. They omit all the poems except the first, and the prose is also substantially abridged in a number of places. The Lismore copy omits many of the poems;

<sup>30</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉirenn*, 1, xvi–xxii.

<sup>31</sup> The two manuscripts have a number of texts in common and there exists a very close relationship between them. Further research is required to determine the exact nature of this relationship. P seems to me to have modernised the spelling in some instances. See also Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*, vol. 2, 438–51.

<sup>32</sup> 23 L 11 is identical with Maynooth C 41 and is probably a copy of it. See comment on these manuscripts in the main text.

it also abridges the prose sometimes, although not as much as Stowe. As far as that part of the *Life* in B which coincides with the *First Life* is concerned, it has only two poems, neither of which are contained in the other manuscripts. B also adds to, and subtracts from the text of the *First Life* to suit its own purposes. Some substantial abbreviations and omissions in B are of critical importance to understanding the nature of the conflation and its relationship to the *First Life* and to other sources.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.1. *Agreement between Egerton 91/Paris and 23 L 11/C 41*

On closer examination of the manuscripts, it is possible to further refine the classification. E/P and 23 L/C pair off against the others in a number of instances. Examples include the following:

|         |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| L       |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3306    | is fechnach 7 as firén<br>foirbhthe in fer                            | is fechnach 7 is firén findbetha-<br>dach 7 is forfi in firén E/P, is<br>feachnach 7 is firéan finnbhethad-<br>hach et is foirbhtha an fer 23 L/C.<br><i>B takes an intermediate position between<br/>the two:</i> is fechnach firenta 7 is<br>findbethach foirbhthe an fer |
| 3311    | fechnach firen forbhthe<br>forasta                                    | fechnach firian fionndbhethach<br>forasta forbhtha fossad E/P, feacht-<br>nach fireanta finnbhethach forusda<br>foirbhthe fosadh 23 L/C, fechnach<br>firian foirfi B, firen forusda foirfe<br>St.                                                                           |
| 3315    | <i>om.</i> (also <i>om.</i> St.)                                      | na findbhethid fechtanaig sin E/P,<br>na finnbheatha fechtnaighthe sin<br>23 L/C, inna hua bfinnbfechtach<br>bfechnach sin B                                                                                                                                                |
| 3419–25 | for cech leth. Docluinti<br>foghur gotha Coluim<br>Cille [...] immunn | fo cosmailius Choluim Chille ut<br>dixit Conaind <i>plus quatrain</i> E/P,<br>for gach leith ut dixit poeta <i>plus</i>                                                                                                                                                     |

<sup>33</sup> See discussion below on the defective original and on the structure and content of the *Second Life*.

*quatrain plus* et is amhla sin do bhí  
 guth Choluim Cille ut dixit poeta  
*plus another quatrain* 23 L/C, *om.*  
 B. St.

3499 in laidh-sea in tsenlaigh mbic sea E/P, 23  
 L/C, *om.* B, St.

3501 Iarlaithi atbertsom E/P, adbheartsom 23  
 L/C, *om.* B, St.

It is noteworthy that E/P and 23 L/C are the only copies to give Brendan's feast day correctly, namely, *hí xuii xl. Iuin'* E/P, *hí xuii Iuin'* 23 L/C, against the erroneous *hí uii kl. Iuin'* L 3317 and *a seised dec do mi Iuin'* B (*recte* Beltaine). This is omitted in Stowe. These copies have also a number of poems which are not contained in L and the other MSS (see below).

## 2.2. *L* against the other MSS

L often stands on its own against the other manuscripts, including B. Here are some examples. References are to the lines of L.

|         | L                                         |                                                               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3308    | in t-aithusc-so                           | <i>om.</i> B, E/P, 23 L/C                                     |
| 3341    | araile fer saidhbhir                      | araile fer mor saidhbhir B, E/P,<br>23 L/C                    |
| 3309    | uasalaithribh (uasalaith-<br>reachaibh E) | uasalathreachaibh B, uasalarachaibh<br>23 L/C                 |
| 3314    | acht mad sin                              | acht mad sin namá B, E/P, St,<br>23 L/C                       |
| 3316    | na ree-sea 7 na haimsire                  | na ree-si B, na rea-sa E/P, 23 L/C,<br><i>om.</i> St.         |
| 3346    | aidheorus he                              | aidheorus de B, E/P, St.                                      |
| 3351    | ba si sin                                 | ba (h)i sin B, 23 L/C, ba hi s(e)in<br>E/P, St.               |
| 3374    | ro scennset                               | rosgennsetar E/P, 23 L/C, roscinn-<br>sidar St., <i>om.</i> B |
| 3380-81 | <i>om.</i>                                | i cinn bliadne iar sin B, E/P,<br>23 L/C                      |
| 3385    | <i>om.</i>                                | immorro B, E/P                                                |
| 3387    | <i>om.</i>                                | diairmithi B, E/P, 23 L/C                                     |
| 3388    | batar annsin . . . na<br>n-ogh            | anggil immorro [. . .] na n-ogh<br>battar annsin B, E/P       |

|         |                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3393    | go gressach                               | i cinn .u. mbliadne E/P, 23 L/C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 3394    | <i>om.</i>                                | iarsin roleg[h] [. . .] ic Escup Eirc<br>E/P, 23 L/C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3395    | <i>om.</i>                                | o ne(a)ch B, St., 23 L/C, o neoch<br>E/P                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3404–05 | facabar-somh                              | facabar B, E/P<br>7 gabhuidh for inchrechadh a<br>dhalt[?] co mór 7 foa cairiuccchad<br>go ger B,<br>7 gabhuidh ica cairiughadhsum cu<br>gér gabhais for increchadh fairsium<br>co mmor 7 for a chairiugudh co<br>ger E/P,<br>7 gabhaidh for increchadh fair go<br>mór St.,<br>7 gabhas for imdergadh eirsion<br>go mór<br>7 for a chairiúghadh go gear 23 L/C |
| 3413    | 7 gabhuidh ica cairiu-<br>ghadh-sum cugér | 7 is edh fodera do a fáicsin-sium<br>seoch cach E/P, B, 23 L/C                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3430    | <i>om.</i>                                | co ro saertha B, E/P, go ro<br>shaoradh St                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3441    | co rosoei                                 | for druim an bleidhmil muiridhe B,<br>E/P                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3609    | for druim in mil moir                     | eissidhe/heside B, St, E/P                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3343    | <i>om.</i> (also <i>om.</i> 23 L/C)       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

In other instances, L agrees with the others against B:

|         |                                                                                                                        |                         |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3311    | a bheith L, E/P                                                                                                        | a mbeith B              |
| 3311–12 | ar ailgius leo na timna<br>L, E/P                                                                                      | ar ailccius na tiomna B |
| 3339    | gein chumhachtach<br>L, E/P, St.                                                                                       | gein amra B             |
| 3360–62 | iarsin roshlecht 'na<br>fhiadhnusi 7 rochí<br>codermhair i comurtha<br>fhaeilti 7 ronbaist iarsin<br>L, E/P, St., 23 L | <i>om.</i> B            |
| 3374    | roscennset L, rosginnsiod<br>23L, rosgennsetar E/P,<br>roscinnsidar St.                                                | rolingestair B          |
| 3565    | i Sliabh nDaidche                                                                                                      | in ionad fo leith B     |
| 3566    | dermair ndosholachta<br>L, E/P, St.                                                                                    | <i>om.</i> B            |
| 3568    | tredhenus L, E/P                                                                                                       | athaidh fada B          |
| 3788–89 | iarna fhacbhail [. . .]<br>airdi-sin L, E/P                                                                            | <i>om.</i> B            |



It also sometimes agrees with B against the others:

|         |                                             |          |
|---------|---------------------------------------------|----------|
| 3367    | tra E/P                                     | om. L, B |
| 3369–73 | ut dixit & stanza E/P, 23 L                 | om. L, B |
| 3375–79 | ut dixit & stanza on 3 wethers<br>E/P, 23 L | om. L, B |

Some of these examples demonstrate the tendency of L and B to abbreviate and to omit the verse, and of B to make changes to suit the purpose of conflating the *Life* with the *Navigatio*. Nevertheless, despite the abbreviations in the prose and the omission of the poems, B still agrees more often with the other MSS than with L.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.3. *The Stowe Version*

Domhnall Ó Duinnín's copy of Royal Irish Academy A iv 1 (St.) represents a more modernised copy of the *Life* than those contained in the other manuscripts, including the later 23 L/C copies. While the scribes of the latter also modernise frequently, they also retain many more original forms than Ó Duinnín. Some examples of modernised forms in St., and to a lesser extent in 23 L/C, are given below: references are again to the lines of L whose readings are also those of B and E unless noted otherwise.

|      | L                   | 23 L/C                    | St.                            |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3307 | accobras codermair  | accobhras go<br>dearmair  | lenab mian go<br>dithcheallach |
| 3308 | i canoin petarlaice | a ccanoinn<br>phetarlaice | a gcanoin an tsean-<br>rachta  |
| 3310 | frisi ndebradh      | risi ndebradh             | frisa ndubradh                 |
| 3313 | cridibh             | coroidhthibh (?)          | croidhedhaibh                  |
| 3329 | cuna ria            | go nach ricfeth           | gona roithfi                   |

<sup>34</sup> The addition of the line *acht nírhat cleirig uile* ('They were not all clerics') in L 3575 in reference to the crew and passengers on Brendan's first voyage is based on the ninth line of the following poem (*Tri longa seolais in saoi*): *nochú cleirchiu luid uile* ('ninety clerics in all went'). The scribe of L has mistaken the Irish numeral *nóchu*, or *nócha*, 'ninety' for the negative particle *nócha* (which evidently did not have the acute accent on the 'o' in his source). The addition is not found in Egerton 91/P, B or Stowe, and was clearly not in the original prose translation into Irish. To say, as Plummer does, that the mistake was due to 'the prose writer' is open to ambiguity. It is almost certainly due to the scribe of L only, which is perhaps what Plummer had in mind. See Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, p. xxxix, note 7.

|         |                                   |                 |                         |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 3374    | roscennset (ros-gennsetar E)      | ró sginnisod    | roscinnsidar            |
| 3384    | cech tan                          | gach uair       | gach uair               |
| 3396    | is tualang Dia                    | is tualong Dia  | is cumachtach Dia       |
| 3403    | do proicept                       | do phróiceapt   | do shenmoir breithre Dé |
| 3403    | luidseom (luidhis B, dochuaidh E) | téit            | dochuaidh               |
| 3404    | facabarsomh                       | fágthair        | factar                  |
| 3410    | cidh dod-fucc (rot tucc B, tug E) | cidh tug tú ale | cread do tug ale        |
| 3414    | neimelnidhi                       | neimhcheillidhe | nemhurchoididhe         |
| 3414    | dogensa                           | dodheansa       | do dhéansa              |
| 3415–16 | cu torussa cugat                  | go dtigiodsa    | go ttora misi chugad    |
| 3441    | co rosoei (co ro saertha B, E)    | go ro shaoradh  | gur chuir               |
| 3442    | gonait (om. B)                    | gonaid          | ro gonadur              |
| 3444    | isin lucc cetna                   | isan log cétna  | isin áit cedna          |
| 3561    | cu tarda (om. B)                  | —               | go ttugadh              |
| 3623    | rofhethnaigh an mhuir             | —               | rochiúnaigh an mhuir    |
| 3625    | a ndeilbh shenta                  | —               | a ndeilbh senduine      |
| 3738    | co ndighser lat                   | —               | go ndechar lat          |
| 3587    | foghabhat (fogabait B)            | —               | fagbhuid                |

#### 2.4. *The Verse*

There are a possible sixteen poems/stanzas in the *First Irish Life*. The first line of each is given below. References are to the lines of L.

|      |      |                                           |
|------|------|-------------------------------------------|
| (1)  | 3351 | Tríocha bó bliocht ní shenaim             |
| (2)  | 3363 | Mobhi a ainm-sium ar tus                  |
| (3)  | 3369 | Braonfind a ainm-sium iar sin             |
| (4)  | 3376 | Tri muilt chorcra suairc in trét          |
| (5)  | 3389 | Aingil i ndelbaibh ogh finn               |
| (6)  | 3422 | Foghar gotha Brenainn bhinn (3419 23 L/C) |
| (7)  | 3422 | Guin gotha Choluim Cille                  |
| (8)  | 3431 | Silledh for aghaid mBrenainn              |
| (9)  | 3444 | Dorine cloch don duine                    |
| (10) | 3462 | Brenuinn breo betha buadhaigh             |
| (11) | 3502 | Ard reileac na n-aingel n-an              |
| (12) | 3577 | Tri long seolais in saoi                  |
| (13) | 3611 | Carais Brenaind buanchrabadh              |
| (14) | 3740 | Sescca fer doibh isin coblach             |
| (15) | 3772 | Adhnaicit-siumh, gerb aicméil             |
| (16) | 3809 | Dia do betha, a Brenainn, sunn            |

The poems are contained in the manuscripts as follows:

|         |                                      |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 23 L/C: | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11    |
| E/P:    | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 |
| L:      | 2, 10, 11, 13, 16 (one line only)    |
| B:      | 14, 15                               |
| St.:    | 1                                    |

Twelve of the poems have only one stanza: Nrs. 1–9, 13–15. Poem 10 has five stanzas, 12 three stanzas, 16 six stanzas; and there are forty lines in the Stokes published edition of poem 11. 23 L/C and E/P share eight poems, Nrs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11. These were probably contained in the original, as were those which are shared by E/P and L after 23 L/C break off, that is, Nrs. 13 and 16. Poem 11 breaks off in 23 L/C after line 16 (= 3517), the scribe pointing out that some of the poem is missing: *tesda cuid don laoidhsi*. Poems (7) and (9) are contained in 23 L/C only. Their status is therefore uncertain. 23 L/C and St. are the only copies to have the first poem. It is possible that this stanza has been omitted from the other copies, but we cannot be certain.

### 3. *The Defective Original Re-assessed*

The *First Life* contains a reasonably complete early life as well as the two voyages, one lasting five years, the other two. It omits the later life. When Brendan and his crew reach *Tír Tairngire* ('The Land of Promise' L 3839; *ad terram ualde desiderabilem* O § 76) on their second voyage, the description of Paradise contained in this version does not appear in the *Latin Life*.<sup>35</sup> For the most part, it seems to be based on a source more or less identical with that found in the text *Scéla Laí Brátha* ('*The Tidings of Doomsday*').<sup>36</sup> Shortly after this description of Paradise, having briefly returned to the text of the Life as contained in the Latin versions, there is an interpolation from another tale, namely, *Fis Adomnán* ('*The Vision of Adamnán*').<sup>37</sup> The *First*

<sup>35</sup> See Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, 138.

<sup>36</sup> See, R. I. Best and O. J. Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre*, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1929, 77–81, fols 31b34–34a23.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67–76, fols 27a1–31b33.

*Irish Life* then comes to an end. The later life of the saint, which is contained in the *Latin Life* and in the *Second Irish Life*, is not given.

Let us examine in a little more detail what is going on here. Both the *First Irish Life* and the *Second Irish Life* begin to deviate from the *Latin Life* after the words uttered by the old pilgrim, ‘*Siridh 7 feghaidh, ar se, ‘brughe parrthais [. . .]’* (L 3855), ‘Search and see’, said he, ‘the regions of Paradise’, which corresponds to the Latin ‘*Sedete, et aspiciite Christi prata, paradisumque [. . .]’* (O, §76).<sup>38</sup> In the *First Irish Life* the following description of Paradise follows the words *brughe parrthais*. The correspondences with the text of *Scéla Laí Brátha* (SLB) are given in bold:

7 muighi milidhi in tiri solusta, suaichnidh, socharthanaig so[h]archain, n-aird, n-aireghdha, n-aluinn, n-oeibhinn. Tir boladhmhar, blathmhinn, bennachtach. Tir ilcheolach, airpheteach, **nualfhaeiltech, nemhthoirrsiuch**. Airm i bhfuighbhuidh,’ ar in senoir, ‘**slainte cen galar, aeibhnes cen imrisan**, aoenta cen tachor, flaithes cen scailedh, **sáimhe cen dímhaine, soaire cen saethar, aenta solusta aingel, airerdha parrthais**, timthrecht aingel, **fleadhugud cen airdhidhbhadh**, seachna phene, aighthe firen, tochaithium na morchasc, betha bennachtach, **coir, chumdaighthe, moir, mhilidhi, saeir, saim, sorch**a, cen dubhai, cen dorchai, cen pecad, cen aimnert, i corpaibh edrochtaibh nemhtruailnidi[b], i sostaib aingel for bruighibh tiri tarrngiri. **Is adhbhul a soillsi 7 a suthaighi na hindsi-sin, a saimhe, a sercaighi, a caeimhe, a chobhsaidh, a fodtacht, a logmhaire, a reidhi, a ruithnigi, a glaine, a gradhmhaire, a gile, a cheolbinni, a noeimhe, a niamhglaine, a soeire, a sádhaile, a haille, a hailgine, a lanshidh, a lanaenta. ‘Mogenar, tra, bias co ndeghairilliud 7 co ndechghnimaib 7 gairfeas Braen find mac Findlogha ina aentaibh isin leth-sin,’** ar in senoir [cétna], ‘**do bhithaitreibh** na hindsi i tam tre bithu na betha’.

A substantial portion of the passage between lines 3855/6 and 3870 of L in the *First Irish Life* agrees verbatim, then, with SLB. In particular, the passage from ‘*nualfhaeiltech, nemhthoirrsiuch*’ in line 3858 to ‘*co ndechghnimaib*’ in line 3870 corresponds to a great extent with the

<sup>38</sup> The text of the *Second Irish Life* reads, ‘*Siridh occus feghaidh*’, or sé, ‘imle 7 bruighi Parrtais . . .’, *Bethada náem nÉrenn* 1, 78, § 150; 2, 76.

passage in *SLB* from ‘nuall faelti cen torsi’ in LU 2468 to ‘co ndegnimaib’ in LU 2487. The scribe of the *Life* has added and omitted words to suit his own purposes, such as some of the descriptors of Paradise, ‘for bruighibh tiri tarngiri’ (L 3865) and part of the final descriptive flurry which contains reference to Saint Brendan’s summoning of the just and good to join him on the island Paradise: “‘Mogenar, tra, bias co ndeghairilliud 7 co ndechghnimaib 7 gairfeas Braenfind mac Findlogha ina aentaigh isin leth-sin”, ar in senoir cétna, “do bhithaitreibh na hindsí i tam tre bithu na betha”’ (“Happy indeed he whom, through just deserts and good deeds, Brendan son of Findlug shall call to join him on that side”, said the same old man, “to inhabit for ever and ever the island in which we are” (L 3870–72)), which corresponds partly with *SLB* ‘Mogenair im- bias co ndegarliud 7 co ndegnimaib 7 berthair do aittreib na cathrach sin i llo bratha [. . .] tria bithu’ (LU 2487–88).

After this, the *Irish Life* returns to the text of the *Latin Life* which, as we have said, does not have the description of Paradise. The latter simply reads ‘*Sedete et aspiciate Christi prata, paradisumque inter undas maris.*’ *Illi autem, uidentes magnalia Dei, Dominum glorificauerunt* (O § 76, VSH 1, p. 139). This corresponds to L 3873–75 ‘Iar bhfaicsin immorro doibhsium in pharrthais sin etir tonnuibh in mhara, machnuighit agus ingantuighit cumór mírbuili Dé . . . [7 glormuraighid] in Coimdhí cumor iar bhfaicsin na moirmirbal-sin’ (‘When they then saw that Paradise amid the waves of the sea, they marvelled and were greatly astonished by the wonders of God . . . [and they glorified] the Lord when they had seen those great miracles.’) In other words, the section intervening in the *Irish Life* between ‘*Síridh 7 feghaidh*’, ar se, ‘*brughe parrthais*’ (L 3855) and ‘*etir tonnuibh in mhara*’ (L 3874) is an interpolation. There follow references in both the Latin and Irish Lives to the body of the old pilgrim being covered in white feathers, like a dove or a seagull, to the celebration of terce, and to the fact that the voyagers did not dare to ask the old man anything—‘*nihil ausi sunt interrogare illum*’ (O § 76, VSB 1, p. 139)/ ‘*ní ralaimset [immorro] ní do fhiarfaigi*’ (L 3880).

After these words, the *First Irish Life* again deviates from the Latin and interpolates an extract from *Fís Adomnán* (FA), running from L 3880 to 3909, from ‘7 no aemdais a n-anmcairdine’ to ‘*isin morgloir sin*’, corresponding to FA (LU 2262–92). The final paragraph of FA, which is a description of the holy city of God, is omitted, as the description of Paradise from *SLB* has been given earlier. There are then two lines corresponding to the end of *SLB*, L 3910–11 (= LU

2491–93), and a final invocation to God through the intercession of St Brendan (L 3912–14).

The interpolation containing the description of Paradise is also contained in the *Second Irish Life*. It is, however, substantially reduced in this version. It omits the material running from the words *muighi milidhi* to *neamhthoirrsiuch* (L 3856–58);<sup>39</sup> a number of the descriptors of Paradise, namely, *sáimhe cen dímhaine*, *saoire cen saethar*, *aenta solusta aingel*, and *airerdha parrthais* (L 3860–61); and the passage from *seachna phene* to *a lanaenta* (L 3862–69). *The Second Life* does not have the *FA* interpolation. The redactor detected the problem and moved to other sources. After *ní ro lamsat immorro ní do fhuarfaighe* (B, § 151), there is the note in Latin in the manuscript, referred to in our discussion previously, that the remainder is taken from another source (*iste fabule sunt plux ad [leg. plus ab] alio libro*).

Plummer argued that the amalgamation of the *FA* extract with the text of the *Life* was purely mechanical. His argument was as follows. In the original manuscript from which the copies of the *First Life* are descended, *FA* followed the *Life of Brendan*. Due to loss or mutilation of leaves, the end of the *Life* and the beginning of the *Fis* were lost. Later scribes, who copied mechanically, failed to notice the loss and amalgamated the two fragments. The compiler of the *Second Life* either used the same defective original, and detected the defect, or he copied from a manuscript in which the two texts had been joined. He noticed that the second part had nothing to do with the first, and discarded it.<sup>40</sup>

In my previous discussion of this matter, I pointed out that Plummer had not detected what appears to be the earlier interpolation from

<sup>39</sup> This material is not in *SLB* either.

<sup>40</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xviii–xix; also Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xxxix–xl. It is clear that the first part of both versions of the *Irish Life*, up to the *Fis Adomnán* interpolation, derive from the same source, which differs in certain respects to the extant Latin *vitae*. For example, they have a number of additions not contained in the *Vita* (see below), and there are some omissions of material contained in the *Vita*, such as the passage which explains the *Fons Brendani* (O § 7, D § 7, S2 § 5), almost certainly St Brendan's Well near the Church of Clonfert beside Newmarket, Co. Cork. The pedigree of Saint Iarlaithe also demonstrates that both versions of the *Betha* derive from an inaccurate original. The inclusion of 'Mochta' for 'Imchada' shows it to be a conflation of the pedigree of 'Iarlaithe m. Logha' and the remainder of the pedigree of 'Iarlaithe m. Trena'. See L 3484–85, B § 21; also P. Ó Riain, *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin 1985, p. 26, line 150.

*SLB*.<sup>41</sup> I did not understand at the time, however, the full significance of this, and I failed to lay sufficient stress on the fact that the copyist of the *First Irish Life* deviated substantially from his original by adding material from other sources. The description of Paradise, whether it is based directly on *SLB* or on another identical source, has clearly been added intentionally as has much of the material which is identical with the text *Dá apstol décc na hÉirenn* ('The Twelve Apostles of Ireland') (*DAD*).<sup>42</sup> It is quite possible, therefore, that the *FA* interpolation is also intentional.<sup>43</sup> According to Best and Bergin, *SLB* is contained in LU only, where it immediately follows *FA*.<sup>44</sup> If the copyist of the Irish Life was following LU, Plummer's thesis with regard to loss of leaves and mechanical copying cannot be correct as the copyist would already have seen *FA* when he copied from *SLB*. If, however, *FA* is copied from a manuscript in which it was not followed by *SLB*, and the paradisaical description identical in places with *SLB* derives from another lost copy of the latter text (or from a floating set paradisaical description), the thesis could still be salvaged. In any case, even if the mechanical explanation is correct, it would not be entirely surprising if the copyist had missed the fact that the *FA* extract did not belong to the original text. Although it is rather crudely inserted, it is not entirely inappropriate and unreasonable. It begins with a reference to the preaching of Saints Peter and Paul and other saints on the matter of punishments and rewards. The earlier interpolation shared with *DAD* also dealt with the punishments, while the passages immediately preceding from *SLB* deal with the rewards.<sup>45</sup>

The compiler of the *Second Life* followed the earlier compiler in incorporating parts or traces of the latter two fragments into his narrative, but decided not to do the same with the *FA* extract. He was

<sup>41</sup> See Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 321–22, note 25.

<sup>42</sup> See discussion below.

<sup>43</sup> See discussion below. According to Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xl, note 2, H. Zimmer also believed the conflation of the *Irish Life* with *Fis Adomnán* to be intentional.

<sup>44</sup> R. I. Best and O. J. Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre*, xx.

<sup>45</sup> The reference to Peter and Paul may be significant. Professor Pádraig Ó Riain has argued in his Notes that there is suggestive evidence of a connection between the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine and the composition of the *Irish Life*. Their Rattoo house was dedicated to Peter and Paul, and Canons Island, near Inis Dá Dromma, which figures prominently in the later part of the *Life*, was founded on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29, 1189. See also note 106 below.

clearly reluctant to interpolate the earlier two fragments, as he abbreviates them substantially. Hence, the description of the pains of Hell in L (approximately thirty-five lines, from 3633 to 3668), and in other copies of the *First Life*, are reduced to the sentence that Brendan saw the pains and misery of Hell. And seventeen lines of the *First Life* as represented by L have been reduced to five lines in B in the *SLB* interpolation. The implication is that he copied from a manuscript in which the *FA* fragment had already been joined to the text of the *Life*, that he detected this, and decided to pass to other sources for the original continuation and ending as it is contained in the *Latin Life*.

#### 4. *The structure and content of the Second Life*

The *Second Irish Life* (B) and the Latin *Vita Oxoniensis* (O) are the most conflate and complete of all extant versions of the *Life of Brendan*, the former representing the last stage of development. In these two texts, as in the other conflate versions, the incorporation of *NB* occurs more or less at the same point.<sup>46</sup> The *Second Irish Life* differs somewhat, however, from the Latin conflations. They insert *NB* (or what they adopt of it) in one continuous narrative into the middle of the respective texts of *VB*. The *Second Irish Life*, on the other hand, consists of alternate extracts from a *Life* identical with the *First Life* and an Irish adaptation of *NB* which draws on a source similar to that of the Latin *Vita*, S1.<sup>47</sup> §§ 1–27 are essentially the same as the *First Life*. The text then moves to *NB*, returns to the *Life* between §§ 41–43, and back to *NB* between § 43 and the middle of § 46; §§ 46–51 revert to the *Life*, followed by *NB* §§ 52–82, *Life* §§ 83–96, *NB* §§ 97–144, and *Life* §§ 145–209.

Many of the biographical incidents in the latter part of the *Second Life*, from § 152 to § 209, are contained in a number of the copies

<sup>46</sup> Kenney, *The Sources*, 412–14; Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xxxvii–xxxix; Plummer, ‘Some New Light’, 130–33; Orlandi, *Navigatio. I. Introduzione*, pp. 9–41; Mac Mathúna, ‘The Structure’, 321–24; Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 280–82.

<sup>47</sup> Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xxxviii; *Bethada náem nÉirenn* vol. 1, xviii and note 1 on p. xxi; Mac Mathúna ‘The Structure’, 325–26.



of the Latin *Vita*. The O recension has by far the most parallels, but, as Plummer correctly observes, there are also shared points with the *Vita Dubliniensis* (D), the *Vita altera Salmanticensis* (S2), and the *Vita Anglie*.<sup>48</sup> The compiler has manifestly drawn on a number of versions and traditions. Some episodes, for example, are not contained in any of the extant Latin recensions. Most of these probably come from already existing Irish sources, as they are contained elsewhere in the literature. They include Dobharchú, §§ 162–64;<sup>49</sup> Aed Guaire §§ 185–91;<sup>50</sup> and Brendan and the young harper §§ 201–04.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the early part of B which coincides with the *First Life*, there is a good deal of verse in this latter part, namely, §§ 155,<sup>52</sup> 158,<sup>53</sup> 160,<sup>54</sup> 166,<sup>55</sup> 174,<sup>56</sup> 177,<sup>57</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xxii.

<sup>49</sup> See Burgess and Strijbosch, 'The Legend', 46, for references.

<sup>50</sup> S. H. O'Grady, (ed. and transl.), *Silva Gadelica* (2 vols, London 1892), vol. 1, 66, 77–78.

<sup>51</sup> Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*, 45–46, for references.

<sup>52</sup> Two stanzas occur here after the end of Brendan's second voyage when he reached eastern Aranmore, 'having been two years on this voyage, and five on the former voyage, so that they were seven years altogether on the two voyages seeking the Land of Promise, as a certain learned man said.' The stanzas say that the voyagers were seven years seeking the Land of Promise, which they found at last in the ocean, a fair and bounteous island, everlasting and undivided.

<sup>53</sup> Brendan sent some of his disciples to the River Forcca (*Forgus nomine* O § 78) to ask for fish from the fishermen. They refused. Brendan cursed the river so that it would never more have any fish. He blessed fifty other streams because the fishermen obeyed him. The stanza occurring here says Brendan blessed seven streams and deprived seven others of their fish.

<sup>54</sup> A stanza which recounts that Brendan laid waste to fifty castles at Bri Oiss in the land of Cliach.

<sup>55</sup> A verse by Mochua mac Dolcáin which recounts and adds to what has been said in the preceding prose. Brendan went with thirteen men to (Britain) and baptized all the men of Alba. Mochua must be Crónán of Cluain Dolcáin and Ó Riain points out in his Notes that Inchcronan formed part of the lands of Clare abbey.

<sup>56</sup> Two stanzas referring to the time Brendan was with Gildas in Britain, one uttered by Gildas, the other by Brendan. Gildas asks Brendan to remain in Britain, intimating that the tribes will obey him for ever, and that he shall profit. Brendan refuses, saying that he cares nothing for the things of this world.

<sup>57</sup> Brendan witnessed the fight of two marine monsters, one of which was saved through the intercession of Saint Brigit. He composed the poem *Brigit bé bithmaith* ('Brigit, a woman ever good'). He goes to Ireland to speak with Brigit about her great powers, which he is lacking. A poem of five stanzas tells this story in verse. It mentions that Brendan spent seven years on the back of the great beast. Plummer considers the poem to be incomplete (See Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 2, 336, note 177). The story of the fight between the sea monsters occurs elsewhere in the literature, see Plummer, *Ibid.*, 335, note to § 175.

184,<sup>58</sup> 208.<sup>59</sup> The short sections §§ 159,<sup>60</sup> 179,<sup>61</sup> 200<sup>62</sup> also belong exclusively to the Irish conflation.

In the following section, a reasonably detailed concordance is presented between the Brussels conflation and L, on the one hand, and the text of *NB* on the other as represented by D.<sup>63</sup> A concordance is also made with the text of *DAD*. This is followed by an analysis and short discussion of the change in the order of episodes in B, together with an account of the relationship with *DAD*. Hopefully, this may help to shed some more light on the nature and mode of the conflation and, hence, develop Plummer's pioneering work on the subject.<sup>64</sup> The paragraphs on the left refer to B. Where these are matched on the right by L, we are dealing with the *Irish Life*. Where they are matched by *NB*, we are dealing with the *Navigatio*. To facilitate the reader, references to Selmer's edition of the *Navigatio* are also given. Explanatory glosses are given in brackets in bold.

#### 4.1. *Concordance with First Life and NB*

- §§ 1–27 L 3305–3562. Early *Life* up to the desire to find a *talam derrit* ('**terra secreta**' of **Latin Life**).
- §§ 28–40 *NB* 85–90, 13; Selmer §§ 1, 2. Beginning of *NB* up to Brendan's desire to seek the island of *The Promised Land of the Saints*, tidings of which Barrind had related to him.

<sup>58</sup> A stanza on the monastery of Clonfert.

<sup>59</sup> Two stanzas, one of which gives the age of Brendan when he died, the other the year of his death.

<sup>60</sup> Brendan and his companions go to Port Eile (or, *port eile* 'to another port') seeking fish. They are welcomed by the fishermen, and Brendan blesses a river which had been barren. This is possibly a variant of § 158. See note 53 above.

<sup>61</sup> This is an addition by the compiler stating that when Brendan left the land of the Britons, he was joined by Bishop Maenu and Saint Senán, formerly Mocaemóc. This is extrapolated from the details presented in the Latin version corresponding to § 184 of the *Second Life* which states that, when Brendan founded Clonfert, he was joined by his fosterling, Mocaemóc/Senán.

<sup>62</sup> This link by the compiler states that after Brendan went to Gaul and performed miracles in eastern parts, he returned to Clonfert in Ireland.

<sup>63</sup> I have not included a detailed breakdown of the introductory section, §§ 1–27, or of the final section of B, §§ 152–209, which is not contained in the *First Life*. Some of the salient points regarding these sections are discussed at various points in this paper.

<sup>64</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xl–xli; Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xix–xxi; Plummer, 'Some New Light', 124–41.

§§ 41–42 L 3562–77. Brendan falls asleep, hears the voice of an angel who says that his request to visit the Land of Promise will be granted by God. He climbs a mountain (*Sliabh Daidche* L; *Cnoc Brenainn aniú* ‘Mt. Brandon today’, additional in Stowe version; he goes ‘to a certain place’ B) and sees the wondrous island in the sea with many angels in and around it. The angel says that he will be with Brendan and will show him the fair island. Brendan weeps with joy.

§§ 43–46, 1–5 NB 90,13–91,13; Selmer §§ 3–5. He sails with fourteen brethren to Saint Enda on Aran, then to his paternal territory; he climbs to the top of a high mountain there (thenceforth called *Suidhe Brenainn* ‘Brendan’s Seat’) near the ocean where their boat was. The boat is then strengthened with iron and ox hides and enough equipment is placed in it for two other boats. (The final sentence constitutes a harmonising sentence to link up with the *Betha* tradition of three boats).

Three latecoming monks from Brendan’s congregation beg to be allowed to come aboard. Brendan allows this, saying that God has prepared a good place for one of them and a place of great punishment for the others (= §§ 45–46 B; Selmer § 5).

§ 46, 5–6 *Dochuaidh immorro Brenainn dochum a luinge iarsna comraitibh sin; 7 docuattar a mhuinnter isin da luing aile battar aca* ‘After this conversation, Brendan went to his boat; and his companions entered their two other boats’. (This is a harmonising link by the compiler).

§ 46, 6–9 L 3574–76. Brendan comes down from the mountain and has three boats built with three sets of oars in each boat, three sails of skins and thirty men in each boat (L); ‘And in this way were Brendan’s boats, with three rows of oars to each boat, and sails of skins of animals both wild and domesticated, and twenty men in each boat’ (B). (The reference to twenty men in each boat in B is to harmonise with the sixty men of the second voyage which immediately follows in this version, see §§ 47–51 below).

om. B L 3576–601 Poem in E/P only: *Tri long seolais in saoi*; following the poem in E/P, Brendan begins his voyage on the terrifying rough ocean and sees many great sea animals and many islands, but does not tarry on them. (The prose following the poem in E/P is omitted in B but is contained in *DAD*, that is, *DAD* corresponds to L 3589–93).

om. B They were five years at sea, met no one and lost no one. Brendan said that God would feed them as he did the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. (L 3594–600. This is neither in B nor in *DAD*).

For L 3601–736, see §§ 83–92 of B below.

- §§ 47–51 L 3736–56. **(The compiler of B jumps to the second voyage).** A jester begs to come on the voyage for God's sake. Brendan takes him and embarks on the voyage with sixty men 'as writings say' **(plus a stanza in B only)**. They set sail and come 'to the port of Aran again', *go port Áronn doridhisi*. **(The use of the word *doridhisi* 'again' is to harmonise with the preceding visit to Aran taken from NB, § 43 B above).**

There follows a description of the Island of Mice in which there are savage mice as big as cats which wish to devour them. Brendan tells the jester to partake of the body and blood of Christ and to go to eternal life. He hears the choirs of angels calling the jester. The jester enquires "what good have I done that I am transported forthwith to Heaven"? According to B, his spirit leaps forth, and is brought immediately to Heaven. **(This is a rationalisation. In L, and in the Latin *Vita*, he jumps overboard).** His body is thrown on to the beach and he is devoured by the mice, his bones only remaining. His name was inscribed in the Martyrology because he was a glorious martyr: *As follus indsin coinircle in Coimdedh tresan pecthach tainic fadeoigh dochum na luinge, do thogha dó dochum nimhe for tus* (and herein is seen the kindness of the Lord, that the sinner who came last to the ship should be chosen of Him to go first to Heaven). **(This is the death of the jester in the second voyage of the *Vital/First Irish Life*).**

- §§ 52–66 NB 91, 14–96; Selmer §§ 6, 7. The voyagers come to the Isle of the Bridles which has steep cliffs and high walls on either side of it. They are led by a dog to a mansion with precious metals and a sufficiency of food and drink. One of the latecoming brothers in the form of a dark hideous evil devil steals a golden bridle. Brendan exorcises the devil, the brother receives the Holy Sacrament, and dies. Angels come to meet his spirit, and take him with them to Heaven. **(This is the loss of the first latecomer in NB).**

Selmer §§ 8, 9. As the voyagers were entering their boat, a young man (*nech óg*) presented them with bread and water which would last them until Easter. They then come to the Island of Sheep, and a person comes to them (*aoín nech chuca*) who tells them where they will spend Pentecost and Easter.

**(Paragraphs 96 to 105.5 of NB; Selmer §§ 10, 11, 12, are omitted due to a defect in the compiler's copy, that is, *Jasconius*, the *Island of Birds*, and the *Community of Ailbe*, up to the description of the monastery).**<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 330, note to § 67.

- § 67 (Composition of compiler to supply defect in his copy of *NB*).
- §§ 68–79 *NB* 105, 5–110, 1; Selmer §§ 12, 13, 14. Description of the monastery, the silent order of monks, the celebration of Christmas, the Soporific Well; stormy sea (**taking the place of the coagulated sea of *NB*, an invention of the compiler of B, § 76 B**), then back to the Island of Sheep.
- NB* 110,1–15 Selmer § 15. (**The episode of the celebration of Easter on Jasconius is omitted, as the whale episode from the *Betha* and *DAD* is given below, §§ 83–85**).
- §§ 80–82 *NB* 110, 15–111; Selmer § 15. They stayed on the Island of Birds until the Octave of Pentecost. The *Procurator* came and met all their needs. A bird alighted on the prow of their boat and made sweet music for them. It spoke to them, informing them of the four seasons that had been ordained for them cyclically until the end of seven years, at which point they would be borne to the land which they were seeking. They would remain there for forty days.
- §§ 83–85 L 3601–68. When Easter came, a great beast (whale) raised its shoulders high above the surface of the waves (**B**) (of the stormy sea and the waves **L**), so that it formed dry land (**B**) (even, solid land like a level field **L**). The voyagers spent a day and two nights on it. When they had entered their boats, the whale dived into the sea at once. (**This is also in *DAD*, that is, *DAD* corresponds to L 3601–08**).
- They celebrate Easter on the back of the whale every year for a period of seven years (**length of time not in *DAD***), as it always raised its back at this time above the waves to make level land (**sic also *DAD* = L 3615–16**).
- om. B L 3617–24. One day they see deep, black whirlpools which threaten to engulf the boats, but Brendan calms the storms and they are saved. (**sic also *DAD*; om. B**).
- § 85 L 3625–68. The devil then appears on the prow of Brendan's boat and shows him the pains of Hell. A long alliterative description of the pains of Hell follows in **L** and *DAD*. (**The pains of Hell are not described in B—that is, L 3633–68 and the corresponding section in *DAD* are omitted. The text says simply that Brendan 'saw its pains and misery'**).
- §§ 86–92 L 3669–736. His company asks Brendan to whom is he speaking. He tells them "a small portion of the pains he had seen." A companion asks to see some of the pains. His wish is granted, but he dies forthwith. Brendan restores him to life.

The voyagers find a fair young woman lying dead from the thrust of a spear which had pierced her between the shoulders and come out between her breasts. She was enormous: a hundred feet high, nine feet between her breasts, and her middle finger seven feet long. Brendan restores her to life. She belongs to the people of the sea; when given a choice of going to Heaven directly or going back to her own people, she chooses Heaven. She receives the blessed sacrament and dies.

They then came to an island with sides so steep they could not enter it. They could hear voices praising God, but could not see any people. A wax tablet was lowered to them on which was writing, stating that this was not the island which had been promised them, that they should cease seeking entry to it, and that they would find the island they sought. They were instructed to return to their own country. They left the island and took the wax tablet with them as a sign of the welcome and care of the island's people for them.

They are seized by a terrible thirst. They see beautiful streams dropping from the cliffs. Brendan says to bless the water before drinking it. When they bless it, the streams dry up, and the devil darts from the water. Hence they are saved through Brendan's intercession.

Chapter 31 (§ 91) is entitled 'Here Brendan returns to Ireland from his first voyage' in B.

He returned after five years (B), seven years (L), and many people came to join him. He performed numerous miracles, and then proceeded to Bishop Erc and to his foster-mother, Ita. The latter counsels him, explaining that his first voyage failed because of the dead skins: the land he seeks is holy consecrated land on which blood of man has never been shed. She advises him to build timber boats (*longa cranda*, § 92). He goes to Connacht where he has an excellent large boat built (*dogniter long dersc-caightech dermair lais*, § 92), and he takes various things on the boat, including wrights and smiths who entreated him to let them go with him. **(Note the confusion with regard to the number of boats, a confusion which occurs at other points in the conflated *Second Life*).**

§§ 93–96 L 3760–86. Entitled 'Here follows the second voyage' in B.

The smith dies and is buried at sea among the waves without drifting and without moving in any direction as if he were in the ground.

They come to the Island of Dwarfs—demons in the shapes of dwarfs whose faces were as black as coal. They cast anchor, but

could not draw it up when they wished to leave. They left it there. Brendan blessed the hands of one of the priests so that he could be a competent smith. The priest then made an excellent new anchor, the likes of which had not been seen before or since.

- §§ 97–120 *NB* 121–29, 12; Selmer §§ 24–27. The voyagers see a fiery mountain on an island in the sea; one of the three latecoming monks goes to the island and begins shrieking loudly. He says: “Alas, my father, for I am being carried away from you [...]”. Brendan and the others leave, and when they look behind, they see a multitude of demons around the monk, and he burning in their midst. (**This is the loss of the third latecomer in *NB***).

Then comes the Judas Episode (**‘and before it should come the story of Aed Guaire’, according to a note in the Brussels version**), followed by the Island of Paul the Hermit, the Island of Sheep and Jasconius at Easter. (§ 120 **represents the end of *NB* in B; it is, however, out of place**).

- §§ 121–26 *NB* 118–21; Selmer §§ 22, 23. They see a crystal pillar, its top near the firmament, whose colour from top to bottom was of crystal. There was an enclosure around it, the colour of silver or glass, through which everything could be seen, and it was full of many great doors through which a boat could pass. They lower the mast of the boat and go through one of the doors. They find a Mass chalice on a bench in the side of the column. Brendan takes the chalice back with him as a sign.

They then came to the Island of Smiths. It was dark and hideous and full of forges. They could hear the bellows being blown and the clang of the hammers on the anvils. Hideous devils—the smiths—on the island cast balls of molten red-hot iron at them, and the sea boiled up like a huge fire. The people on the island were crying and shrieking and they began hurling the balls of fire at one another. They were ‘the devil’s people, for it is clear that these all belonged to the company of Hell’ (B § 123).

- §§ 127–44 *NB* 111–18; Selmer §§ 16, 17, 18, 19. A great sea monster threatens to destroy the boat and swallow the voyagers (The Devouring Beast). Brendan says to fear not, that the Lord will deliver them, as he delivered David from Goliath, and Jonah from the belly of the whale. Another monster appears, attacks and destroys the first one. They come to a beautiful island of roots and fragrant herbs and find the hind part of the defeated sea monster on the strand. Brendan instructs the voyagers to

eat the flesh of the animal and to bring as much with them as will last for a month.

They then come to the Island of the Three Choirs (the Island of the Strong Men), the groups being made up respectively of boys, young men and old men. The three peoples went ceremoniously through the island reciting prayers. One of Brendan's three latecoming brothers is expected on the island and he goes to join them. The people of the island were very joyful and they kissed him, making him welcome. (**This is the loss of the second latecomer in NB**).

When Brendan and the others had departed the island, they lived for twelve days on two baskets of fruit. After that they fasted for three days. A bird then alighted on their boat bearing a branch with wonderful large berries. These berries fed them for another twelve days. Then to the Island of Grapes (40 days and 40 nights), followed by the griffin and the fight between the marine monsters.

- §§ 145–51    L 3787–3880. The Island of the Twelve Irishmen and the Seacat; The Land of Promise. (**L passes to *Fís Adamnáin* at line 3880**).
- §§ 152–4    Land of Promise (continued).
- §§ 155–6    Brendan returns home. Arrives in Aran.
- §§ 157–209    To Inis Dá Dromma. Rest of later life.

#### 4.2. *Change in the Order of Episodes in the Second Irish Life*

The *Second Life* adheres to the scheme of the *First Life* and the *Latin Life* in dividing the voyages into five years and two years respectively. The order of L, and of the *First Life* in general, is adhered to with the exception of the jester/*crossán* episode which is transferred from the second voyage to the first, that is §§ 47–51 (L 3736–56) belong originally to the second voyage. Plummer argued that the reason for placing the episode here was because the compiler wished to bring together the three latecoming monks, and their predicted fate, from NB (§§ 45–46 of B) with the latecoming jester from the *Life*, with his fate (§§ 47–51 B).<sup>66</sup> This is only partly correct.

The compiler does not recognise the shipwrights and smith(s) in the *Life* as latecomers, which leaves him with only one latecomer in

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 330, note to §§ 47–51.



this part of the conflation. He chooses to conjoin this latecomer with the three latecoming monks from *NB*. In other words, he has four latecomers in all, one from the *Life* and three from *NB*. In the *First Irish Life* (§ 51, 5–7; L 3754–56), but not in the *Latin Vita*, the reason is given why the jester is the first person to die, namely, the dictum that the last shall be first: *As follus indsin coinircle in Coimdedh tresan pecthach tainic fadeoigh dochum na luinge, do thogha dó dochum nimhe for tus* ('And it is manifest herein the kindness of the Lord, that the sinner who came last to the ship should be chosen to go first to Heaven'). This is also in the *Second Irish Life*, and is used by the compiler to apply to the loss of latecomers in general in both the *Life* and *NB*. Hence, the reason for transferring the jester to the first voyage is also to harmonise with the words of Christ in the *Irish Life* that the last shall be first. Since the compiler of the *Second Life* chooses to retain this reference, the death of the jester must logically precede the latecomers of *NB*. The *First Life* also adds the following, which is omitted in the *Second Life*: *Is amhlaid sin tra bias cech caenduthrachtach deidhinach thicfa isin eclais cu ragha artus docum nime tre imarcraidh caenduthracha sech in lucht batar rompa: ut Christus ait: nouisimi primi, [primi] nouisimi* ('Even so then will every fully devout person who will come last into the Church go first to Heaven on account of his abundance of goodwill, rather than those who had preceded him: as Christ says, "The first shall be last, and the last first"').<sup>67</sup>

In *B*, the jester episode precedes the episode of the Island of the Bridles of *NB* and the death of the first latecoming monk. This grouping together of the death of the jester and the first latecoming monk is quite felicitous in so far as both of them die and go to Heaven, unlike the other two supernumeraries, one of whom burns to death, the other being left behind on the Island of the Three Choirs.

The transference of the jester to the first voyage may also be connected with the fact that, while in the first voyage the sections of *NB* occur in the order of the original, in the second voyage the order of the three blocks §§ 97–144 has been reversed.<sup>68</sup> This reverse ordering permits the compiler to group together the death of the smith

<sup>67</sup> See Thomas Owen Clancy for a discussion of the significance of this moral in the *Irish Life* and of the nature of the jester material in general in both the *Life* and in *Immram Ua Corra*, 'Subversion at Sea', 210–11.

<sup>68</sup> Plummer points out in his notes on the text that he was unable to discover the reasons for the reversal, *ibid.*, vol. 2, 333.

in the neighbourhood of the Island of Dwarfs with the death by burning of the third latecomer in *NB* on the volcanic island. Both islands are inhabited by a multitude of demons. The dwarfs are demons whose faces are as black as coal. The reverse ordering of the episodes also brings together a number of the animal episodes: the fight between the horrific griffin and the bird from the Island of Saint Ailbe, on the one hand, and the contest between the monstrous sea-cat on the Island of the Twelve Irishmen and the great sea whale, which came to the rescue of Brendan and his monks, on the other hand. Between the two fights is the episode of the shoals of fish and monsters of the ocean which scare the voyagers and then disappear on hearing Brendan saying Mass in a very loud voice.

5. *Textual interrelations and the status of* *Dá apstol décc na hÉirenn* (DAD) (*'The Twelve Apostles of Ireland'*)

The original *Vita Brendani* may have been composed as early as the end of the eighth century. It is widely assumed, for example, that *Vita*-type traditions are contained in the *Life of Saint Malo*, of which the earliest version, Deacon Bili's, dates between c. 865 and 872. Bili points out in his prologue that his work is based on an earlier anonymous *Vita* which had been corrupted during the course of transmission.<sup>69</sup> There are also good reasons for assuming that the *Navigatio* was influenced by *Vita* material and by floating oral traditions.<sup>70</sup> Brendan's visit to Enda on Aran (L 3741–42, *NB* 3), and the celebration of Easter on the back of the whale in the *Navigatio* (L 3601–616, *NB* 10, 15, 27) are taken by various scholars to be derived from the *Vita*.<sup>71</sup> There are also certain nuclei of episodes,

<sup>69</sup> See Orlandi, *Navigatio. I. Introduzione*, 72–73; S. Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions to a Study of the Voyages of Saint Brendan and Saint Malo', in C. Laurent and H. Davis, ed., *Irlande et Bretagne, vingt siècles d'histoire*, Rennes, 1994, 40–53; Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 131ff.

<sup>70</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xxxix; Orlandi, *Navigatio. I. Introduzione*, 43–73; Giovanni Orlandi, 'Temi e correnti nelle leggende di viaggio dell' "occidente alto medievale"', in: *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale*, 2 vols, Spoleto 1983 (Settimane di studi del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo, 29), vol. 2, 561; Haug, 'Vom Imram', 284; Mac Mathúna 'The Structure', 328–34; Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 132–42.

<sup>71</sup> See Schulze, 'Zur Brandanlegende', 262–63; Orlandi, *Navigatio. I. Introduzione*, 62–64, 43–47; Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 329.

sometimes occurring in the same sequence in the two texts, which suggest that the author of the *Navigatio* drew on *Vita*-type material.<sup>72</sup>

In considering the interrelationships between the various voyage texts, it is important that sufficient prominence be given to episodes which combine similarity of content with more or less the same sequencing. Neither the detail nor the sequencing need match exactly in order to establish a common nucleus. The critical question is the manner in which common nuclei find their way into the texts.<sup>73</sup> For example, the similarities may be due in part to the possibility, suggested by Walter Haug, that the *Navigatio* has drawn on a lost proto-*Navigatio* which in turn was based on a proto-*Máel Dúin*, akin to the second part of the extant *Máel Dúin*.<sup>74</sup> James Carney also held that there was a proto-*Navigatio* which had Brendan of Birr, not Brendan of Clonfert/Brendan moccu Altae, as protagonist. He believed that this tale could have been the source of both the *Navigatio* and *Immram Brain*.<sup>75</sup> While I too have argued in favour of the chronological priority of the *Navigatio* over *Máel Dúin*, it must always be borne in mind that these tales are quite different in many ways, just as are the other voyage tales.<sup>76</sup> Although the existence at one time of a proto-*Navigatio* is not out of the question, it is most probable that many of the similarities between the tales are due to their adoption of the same floating written and/or oral traditions. These traditions need not necessarily have been contained in either fully-formed proto-*Navigatio* or proto-*Máel Dúin* tales but rather in shorter skeletal forms which provided some of the episodic nuclei of the extant tales to which further episodes may have been added during the course of composition and transmission. This suggestion is close to, but not identical with, the scenario outlined by Haug. We know, for example, that one of the redactors of *Immram Ua Corra*, albeit possibly a

<sup>72</sup> See Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 328ff.

<sup>73</sup> The island supported by four legs (or the single island on a pedestal), the hermit episodes and the supernumeraries, for example, are pivotal to our appreciation of the material in general. See Mac Mathúna 'The Structure', 346–47; Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'Motif and Episodic Clustering in Early Irish Voyage Literature', in *(Re)Oralisierung*, ed. H. L. C. Tristram, Tübingen 1996 (*ScriptOralia*, 84), 247–62; Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 141–65.

<sup>74</sup> Haug, 'Vom Imram', 283.

<sup>75</sup> Carney, 'Rev. of *Navigatio sancti Brendani*' (Selmer), 42–43.

<sup>76</sup> Mac Mathúna, 'Motif and Episodic Clustering', 247ff. On differences between the voyage tales in terms of structure, style and intent, see Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Subversion at Sea', 194–225.

later redactor, knew of the *Máel Dúin* story either in part or in whole. While recognizing that these latter two tales are quite distinct and that there is not a perfect match between episodes, it is possible, as I have suggested elsewhere, that the former tale has borrowed from the latter, and that the latter in turn is partly based on the *Navigatio*.<sup>77</sup> In any event, since dependence of one text on another in terms of point and purpose is not claimed, the role of floating written and oral traditions, and of fresh composition, are permitted to play their part in the process of the artistic creation of the individual tales.

Returning to the relationship between the *Navigatio* and the *Life*, the former also influenced the latter, partly because the two are conflated in many of the extant versions of the *Life* which survive in late copies only.<sup>78</sup> The change from five years wandering at L 3594 to seven years at L 3609, 3717 appears to be an example of such influence. For other examples of inconsistencies in the *Life*, see the commentary in bold on the concordance of episodes given earlier. Plummer argues that the change from *talam derri* L 3561 (*terra secreta*, VB) to *tír tairngire* 'Land of Promise' at L 3564, B § 41, L 3839, B § 148, L 3844, B § 149 (and also presumably at L 3865) reflect the influence of the *Navigatio*. This is possibly correct, as the instances corresponding to L 3839 and L 3844 in O, for example, do not use the term *Terra Repromissionis*. O has *ad terram quam querebant* (O § 75 = L 3839) and *ad terram ualde desiderabilem* (O § 76 = L 3844). However, the *terra secreta* is linked organically in the extant versions of the *Life* with that of the *Terra Repromissionis*, and provides a bridge between the goal in the *Life* and the goal in the *Navigatio*.<sup>79</sup>

Some of the additions and inconsistencies contained in the *Irish Life* are not entirely due to the *Navigatio* according to Plummer, but to another text which, in one of the O'Clery manuscripts—O'Clery<sup>1</sup> (Brussels 2324–2340)—is entitled *Dá apstol décc na hÉrenn* (DAD).<sup>80</sup> This text is also contained in a number of other manuscripts, some going as far back possibly as the fourteenth century.<sup>81</sup> The voyage

<sup>77</sup> Mac Mathúna, *ibid.*, 247ff.

<sup>78</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xxi, note 2.

<sup>79</sup> See Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 325–26; Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, l, xvii–iii.

<sup>80</sup> This text has been variously designated Brendan ii by Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xix, note 2, and VB 7 by Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 322–23; see Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*, 11–12.

<sup>81</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, 1, xxiv–xxv; Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Eine Variante der Brendan-Legende', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 10 (1915), 408–20,

to the Land of Promise is occasioned by the appearance of a wonderful flower at a feast prepared by Saint Finian for the so-called twelve apostles of Ireland. They decide to cast lots to see who will go in search of the land of the flower, and it falls on Brendan of Birr. Because the latter is advanced in years, Brendan moccu Altae says that he will go in his place, and sets out with 255 companions in a single boat.<sup>82</sup> There follows a number of episodes at sea which are more or less identical with the text of the *Betha*. The beginning of the tale resembles *echtrae*-type tales in Irish in which the hero is lured to the Otherworld by a beautiful maiden bearing a sweet-smelling branch or flower. It seems essentially to be an explanatory myth to reconcile conflicting traditions as to which Brendan was the navigator, Brendan of Birr or Brendan moccu Altae.<sup>83</sup>

Plummer argues that the following passages are taken from this source: L 3589–93, 3601–18, 3615–68, that is, the celebration of repeated Easters on the back of the whale, the engulfing of the voyagers by whirlpools and the description of the pains of Hell.<sup>84</sup> The passage concerning five years spent on the ocean belongs to the *Vita* tradition and is not contained in *DAD* (L 3594–600). *DAD* simply says that they were one year on the voyage (see below). Neither *DAD* nor the Latin *Vita* have the contradictory sentence contained in the *Betha* which speaks of celebrating Easter on the back of the whale for a period of seven years (L 3608–09). This is almost certainly an

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p. 408; Kenney, *The Sources*, 417; Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 322–23; Burgess and Srijbosch, *The Legend*, 11–12. References to the text of *DAD* below are from Plummer's edition, *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, 96–102; vol. 2, 93–98.

<sup>82</sup> Plummer erroneously gives the number of voyagers as being either 155 (*Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xix) or 158 (*Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xli).

<sup>83</sup> It has been suggested that Brendan moccu Altae's cult may be a development of the cult of another early Brendan, Brendan of Birr, or that the two are derived from one figure. See Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Towards a Methodology in Early Irish Hagiography', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 146–60, at pp. 146–47. For a discussion of the question, see Jonathan M. Wooding, 'St. Brendan, Clonfert and the Ocean: Charting the Voyages of a Cult', in: J. Higgins and C. Cuniffe, ed., *Aspects of Clonfert and its Vicinity*, Galway Heritage Council and Crowsrock Press (in press).

<sup>84</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xix–xx; *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xli. See *Bethada náem nÉrenn* vol. 1, 97, vol. 2, 94. *DAD* helps in establishing the original text of the *Betha*. In some instances it agrees with E/P, in other instances with L. See, for example, agreement with E/P: *ilar/imad na mbleidmíl muiridí* (om. L 3592), *co cenn E/P (fria L 3594)*, *tenna* (L 3645), *dimaoine* (L 3645), *salcha, senta, senbrena* (om. L 3646), *(gol) gér garc* (om. L 3647). There is agreement between L and *DAD* in the important matter of Brendan being the only one to see the devil on the prow of the boat—*7 ní fhaca nech acusom hé acht Brenainn a oenar* (om. E/P).

interpolation by the compiler of the *Betha*, either from a reminiscence of *NB*, or from the verse of Cuimine of Connor, which is then quoted (L 3601–04). The poem represents Brendan as passing the whole of seven years on the back of the whale.<sup>85</sup>

Thurneysen argues that the *Betha* cannot stem directly from *DAD*, as the latter lacks the verse in places where the texts otherwise agree and also lacks the warning of the devil that to look into Hell will lead to death. He also refers to a word which is correct in the *Betha* but which the context shows the scribe of *DAD* to have misunderstood. That *DAD* may derive from the *Betha* he deems possible, but points out that the contradiction contained in the *Betha* with respect to the length of the voyage is not in *DAD*. It is possible, to be sure, that *DAD* may simply have abbreviated in this instance. He thinks that the two texts may go back to the same original, but is unable to come to a decision on the available evidence.<sup>86</sup>

Let us compare briefly the manner in which the two texts handle the question of the length of the voyage and the amount of time spent on the whale to see if it might be possible to throw a little more light on the matter. Where the *Betha* speaks of five years voyaging, *DAD* states that they were only a year on this voyage. For *Batur tra amlaid sin fria re .u. mbliad- for an aicen* ('They were then five years on the ocean') (L 3594), *DAD* has *Bator dino co cenn mbliadhna arin iomramh sin* ('They were then a year on that voyage') (§ 6). *DAD* then moves directly to the approach of Easter, leaving out the references contained in the *Betha* that the voyagers did not meet anyone at sea and that God provided them with food, just as he had provided the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes. It rejoins the *Betha* with the line *Is annsin ba comhfochraibh don cháisc* ('And then Easter was drawing near'), which corresponds to L 3601; it has also the remainder of this passage up to the interpolation with regard to the seven years spent on the back of the whale—*Et ba hamlaid doceileabraitis in chaisc co cenn secht mbliadne for druim in mil moir* ('And they celebrated Easter in this way for seven years on the back of the whale').

<sup>85</sup> Plummer believed that this confirmed his suggestion that the whale story did not belong originally to *VB*. See *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xxxix; *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, xx, note 1.

<sup>86</sup> See Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Eine Variante', 408–09 and 418, note 1.

An examination of the manuscripts reveals that the original reading of the *Betha* at L 3594 was not *re .u. mbliad-* ('for five years'), as in the Lismore copy, but *co cenn .u. mbliad-*, the reading of E/P (and St, *go cenn coig mbliadhan*), *co cenn* also being the reading of *DAD*. A little further down in the *Betha*, at L 3609, *co cenn* is also used with regard to the seven years spent on the back of the whale—*co cenn secht mbliad-* ('for seven years'). If we assume that *DAD* was copying from a text similar to, or identical with the *Betha*, the contradiction between *co cenn .u. mbliad-* and *co cenn secht mbliad-* would have provided a stark contrast for the copyist, who may have thought that there was a mistake in his source, or that he was failing to read the numbers correctly (possibly written in the manuscript as *.u.mbliad-* and *.iii.mbliad-* respectfully). He may perhaps have been confused and decided to harmonise his material by omitting reference to both five years and seven years, substituting instead *co cenn mbliadhna* ('for a year').<sup>87</sup> While this would have avoided the stark contradiction, he was still left with the less glaring one in the later reference to the whale returning every year at Easter (L 3615–6, *DAD*, § 6). On the other hand, the reference to seven years spent on the back of the whale is almost certainly an addition in the *Betha* and the scribe of *DAD* may have been copying from a text which did not contain it. On balance, it appears more likely that *DAD* borrowed from the *Betha*. Even if this is true, however, the compiler of the *Betha* included material which it shares with *DAD* that is not contained in the Latin sources.

The story of the voyagers being engulfed by whirlpools (L 3617ff.) is contained in the *Betha* and *DAD* alone. It is not in the *Latin Life*. The devil alighting on the mast of the boat and showing Brendan the entrance to Hell also occurs in the *Latin Life* of O (§ 67), and probably belongs to the *Vita Brendani*. The description of the pains of Hell does not, however, occur in the Latin *vitae*. Nor does it occur in B, although it is clear that the compiler had the passage before him, as he simply summarises it in a few words. The compiler of B, in fact, either left out, or substantially reduced, those elements which did not belong to the *Latin Life*. For example, he omits L 3589–600, L 3617–24 and L 3633–68, the long description of Hell

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<sup>87</sup> It should be noted in this connection that the main interest of the author of *DAD* is not Brendan's voyage *per se* but the Judas episode.



referred to earlier. In other words, he omits most of the material which the *First Life* shares with *DAD*. It seems clear that he detected this interpolation, just as he detected the later ones from *Scéal Laí Brátha* and *Fís Adomnán*. He seems to have retained the whale because it suited his own purposes of incorporating as much information as possible while simultaneously abbreviating longer descriptive passages which added little to the storyline. The whale episode in the *First Life* and *DAD* is appreciably shorter and much less complicated than its counterpart in *NB*.<sup>88</sup>

### 5.1. *Relationship with the Latin Life*

The *Irish Life* and the Irish version of the *Navigatio* in B were almost certainly based on Latin originals. The Latin original of the *Life* is probably alluded to in L 3740: *amal atherat na scribinn* ('as writings affirm'), and there are a number of mistranslations or misreadings by the scribe of the original texts. A couple of examples will suffice here for our purposes. In the section of the second voyage dealing with the death of the smith who has become ill (L 3762), Brendan says "*Cidh mhachtnuighi?*" ("Why do you wonder?"), which is no doubt a mistake for what is the correct reading in O: "*Quid moraris?*" ("Why do you delay?"). The scribe has probably misread the Latin as *Quid miraris*.<sup>89</sup> The sentence *Leiccidh bhar ffoirend isin luing isteach* ("Take your crew into the boat") (§ 76 B), in an extract from *NB*, is clearly a reiteration of a mistake contained in the original Latin: "*mittite remiges in nauim*" ("Take your crew into the boat"), *remiges* being a mistake for *remos* ('oars').<sup>90</sup>

Of the five versions of the *Latin Life*—S1, S2, O, D, and *Vita Anglie*—only one, S2, is not conflated with the *Navigatio*. Plummer and Sharpe have demonstrated that O and S have a number of more or less identical *Lives* which, as Sharpe argues, points to the existence of a lost manuscript Θ from which the *Lives* were copied by the original compiler of O and the scribes of S.<sup>91</sup> The *Life of*

<sup>88</sup> The Judas episode in *DAD* is different to the accounts contained in *VB* and *NB*. It also occurs as a separate story in the Book of Fermoy (f. 58a = p. 85).

<sup>89</sup> Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 2, 332, note to § 93.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 331–32, note to § 76. Note that the *Second Irish Life* has the correct reading *rámha* in § 53 where the Latin version D has *remiges uel remos* and in § 121 where both D and O have *remiges*.

<sup>91</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 291.



*Brendan* is not, however, one of these *Lives*. To quote Sharpe: 'Textually, the copy of *Nauigatio S. Brendani* used by the redactor of O was closer to the original text (or rather, the critical text of Selmer) than that copied by the compiler of S, while the *uita* as preserved in S is much too abbreviated to have served as the source of the conflated text in O. These texts can have no part in a common collective archetype'.<sup>92</sup>

The short S2 text is a late abbreviation of the *Vita* for reading aloud, a fact stated in § 17 of this version: *Hactenus de plurimis pauca diximus. Nunc uero lectionalis modus ultra cogit nos transilire*, which, in short, means that for purposes of reading we are compelled to skip over things.<sup>93</sup> Plummer's view that this version represents the primitive *Life* does not appear to stand up to close scrutiny on the available evidence. There are a number of instances in which it seems to be an expurgated version of a *Life* similar to O. Hence, in the section dealing with Brendan's first alms, namely, thirty cows and calves as baptismal offering from Airde mac Fidaig (L 3341–53; §§ 4, 5), O, D and the Irish versions agree that Airde adopts the saint as his fosterling. Although the episode is in substance the same as in the other versions in S2, the final reference to the adoption of Brendan as Airde's fosterling is omitted.<sup>94</sup> S2 also omits the reference to Bishop Erc crying in the presence of Brendan. This is contained in the *First Irish Life* and in R.<sup>95</sup> In the episode regarding the amount of time spent with Íte, O and S2 agree in substance, but the latter seems again to be condensed from a text similar to O which is close to the Irish *Betha*.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>93</sup> Most of the witnesses are abbreviated, S2 being the most abbreviated Latin version, R the least.

<sup>94</sup> *Bid dalta damsá in mac so tre bithu na betha* ("This boy will be my fosterling for ever and ever") L 3352–3, B § 5; *Confiteor* [...] *te alumnū meū ac futurū dominū* R § 2, D c. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Et genu flexo, fundens lacrimas ad deum orauit* R § 3, S2 § 3, M § 3, Capg. I, 137; *roshlecht 'na fhiadhnusi 7 rochí codermhair i comurtha fhaeilte* ('He knelt before him, and wept exceedingly as a sign of joy') L 3361–2, E/P, 23L/C.

<sup>96</sup> L 3381–4, B § 9. D expands quite a bit here, naming Íte's monastery as Cluain Credhal and saying that it is situated at the foot of Mt. Luachra (*iuxta radices montis Luachra in regione Hua Conayll Gabra*). The following incident—L 3385–92 (including a stanza of verse), B § 10—is omitted in S2. In it, Brendan says that he is happy because Íte and the other virgins, who are angels, are rearing him. The reference to the virgins being angels is contained in neither O nor D.

Nevertheless, although abbreviated, S2 is quite close to both the *Betha* and O. For example, all three versions contain the voyages, albeit greatly reduced in S2. It has been suggested by Orlandi that S2 and O form one group; S1, the *Betha* and the *Vita Anglie* another; and D, on its own, a third.<sup>97</sup> This has proven to be a useful working hypothesis. At the present stage of research, we may say that the *Betha* and S1 are clearly linked,<sup>98</sup> and that S2 seems to be an expurgated version of O. S2 has, however, used other sources which the compiler of the *Second Irish Life* has also drawn on. In other words, there appears to be a link between O, S2 and B, and a further link between S2 and B.

The copyist of S2, as is clear from the section on Iarlaithe, which is much more detailed by comparison with previous episodes, had a greater interest in Connacht affairs than in other areas. It is also the only Latin copy, together with B, to have in the later *Life* an account of Brendan and his monks going to Uí Mhaine<sup>99</sup>, because they have obligations there and because it is there that their resurrection will be.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Orlandi, *Navigatio*, I. *Introduzione*, 29–41. Orlandi considers it possible that the *Vita Anglie* may derive directly from the archetype of the extant *Vita* texts. R. Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 390–91, states that D is of uncertain origin, a different line of transmission. The D sister manuscripts, M and T, independently derive from the same lost collection which must have been kept in a Franciscan friary, probably in south Leinster. A possible provenance or location for D is indicated by Ussher in 1622, who, when apparently discussing the *Life of Brendan* in M, referred to 'the manuscript books which I have me withal here, in Saint Brendan's own country, (one whereof was transcribed for the use of the friars minor of Kilkenny, about the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and fifty)'. Quoted by Pádraig Ó Riain, *Beatha Bharra. Saint Finbarr of Cork. The Complete Life*, London, 1994 (Irish Texts Society, 57), 102. The D recension has a number of similarities with the *Betha*, particularly in providing personal names, patrynomics and placenames. As regards O, in a particularly important contribution, Professor Ó Riain has suggested revised datings for the two manuscripts containing this version, namely, Rawlinson B 485 (R<sup>1</sup>) and Rawlinson B 505 (R<sup>2</sup>), see *Beatha Bharra*, 104–13.

<sup>98</sup> See Plummer, ed., *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, xl, n. 3; Kenney, *The Sources*, 412–14; Mac Mathúna, 'The Structure', 324–26.

<sup>99</sup> In Mananeorum S2 (id est, Y Mani in margin).

<sup>100</sup> According to these copies (S2 § 16a, B § 183), it was at this time that the Battle of Cúil Dreimne between Diarmait mac Cerbaill and the kings of the north of Ireland was being fought. Both the *Vita* and the *Betha* of B continue then with the foundation by Brendan of Clonfert (B § 184; S2 16b; M 21, Capg. I, 152), and the death of his fosterling Mocáemóc, formerly called Senán, who is restored to life by having Bishop Maenu (Moeneiu M; Moneu R) lay Brendan's *bachall* on the corpse. This is followed by the long Aed Guaire interpolation in B (§§ 185–91). This deals with the part played by Brendan in the quarrel between Saint Ruadán

5.2. *The Date of the Irish Life*

In seeking to establish the date of composition of the *Life*, while linguistic evidence is clearly important, it will not succeed on its own in giving us a narrow time framework.<sup>101</sup> Passages added to his source by the vernacular compiler will probably prove to be more reliable, as these tend to reflect later and more contemporary developments.<sup>102</sup> There is a tendency to introduce in vernacular lives, for example, genealogical and onomastic data normally kept to a minimum in *Latin Lives*. Brendan's *Life* is similar to other vernacular Lives in this regard. The Exordium in its entirety, for example, is confined to the *Irish Life*. As to the genealogy, our manuscripts divide into two groups. The Lismore and Brussels copies have only a short pedigree, while a number of the others have a detailed genealogical tree of the saint.<sup>103</sup>

However, neither the Exordium nor the genealogy help much in determining the circumstances leading to the composition of the work. The information contained in the *Irish Life* regarding Brendan's

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of Lorrha and Diarmait mac Cerbaill, ending in the cursing and desolation of Tara and the death of Diarmait. This episode is represented as occurring when Brendan was on his voyage. Plummer points out that this is the reason the heading of the chapter in the manuscript states that it ought to come earlier in the narrative, before the Judas story § 100–06 (*Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 2, 336, note to § 186). There are other reasons why the compiler may have interpolated the story at this point. Both Ua Maine and Diarmait mac Cerbaill have just been mentioned in connection with the foundation of Clonfert. According to the *Life of Ruadan* (Plummer, ed., *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, vol. 1, 317–29, § 27; 11, 308–20) Aed Guaire was king of Ua Maine at the time. Moreover, Brendan is linked with Ruadán in the *Life of Ruadán*, and in the version of the story adopted by the compiler, Ruadán is joined by the twelve apostles of Ireland.

<sup>101</sup> A date in the twelfth century would be in keeping with the linguistic evidence. For example, I have counted more than twenty examples of independent object pronouns in L against fifteen examples of infixed pronouns. Three of the latter come from the story of the sea monsters which is extant in other sources, one from the *Fis Adomnán* interpolation, and five from the verse. There is also an example of a subject pronoun.

<sup>102</sup> As Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Beatha Bharra*, 35, remarks: 'A reliable date of composition is much more likely to emerge from an examination of the passages apparently added to his source by the vernacular redactor, the underlying assumption being that such additions would normally have been informed by later political or ecclesiastical developments'. See also Richard Sharpe's remarks on this method, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 88–89.

<sup>103</sup> Hence, while L and B omit the long Brendan genealogy, it is contained in the other principal manuscripts: *Brenainn mac Finnlogha do shlicht Ceir meic Fhergus a L; Brenfiond mac Findloga mic Olchon mic Findchatha mic Gosa mic Gaible mic Echne mic Taland mic Ithacair mic Alta mic Ogomon mic Fidchuiri mic Maga Taet E/P, St., 23 L 11/C*. See Brendan's genealogy in Pádraig Ó Riain, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*,

tribal affiliation, on the other hand, is of more importance in this respect. Brendan belonged to the Alltraige Caille of the Ciarraige Luachra,<sup>104</sup> and there is evidence that the lands of the ruling house of the Ciarraige Luachra in the half century preceding the Norman invasion lay in the old kingdom of the Alltraige.<sup>105</sup> This may imply that the *Irish Life*, which mentions the Alltraige, was composed in or around this period.<sup>106</sup>

St Íte, Brendan's *muime* or foster mother, also plays a prominent role in the *Life*. Her principal foundation was at Cell Íte, close to Sliabh Luachra, and there is evidence that the Ciarraige Luachra in the twelfth century had pretensions to control land as far as Cell Íte and Cúil Éinne (Cooliney, near Charleville, east of Tullylease). Adjoining Tullylease is the parish of Clonfert whose patron saint was Saint Brendan. If some of these episodes in the *Life* concerning Brendan and Cell Íte suggest claims to Tullylease, which later belonged to Cloyne, it is not unnatural that the patron of Cloyne, Colmán mac Léiníne, is introduced in a subservient role to Brendan.<sup>107</sup> The *Betha* and the *Latin Lives* also say that Brendan read with Bishop Erc for five years and that a wild deer came daily from Sliabh Luachra to feed the saint.<sup>108</sup> The implication here is that Bishop Erc's church was near Sliabh Luachra.

Leaving aside the Corcu Duibne references, the impression is given in general that the *Vita* and *Betha* are concerned with four main cen-

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Dublin 1985, p. 22, § 127.1. 2; and other references in the Index of Saints, sub Brénainn m. Findlogu etc., p. 229. Note also that the *Betha* has a pedigree of Saint Iarlaithe which is not contained in the *Vita*, cf. note 37 above.

<sup>104</sup> *Do Chiarraigi Luachra dhó .i. do Alltraigi Caille doshainnred L, Do Chiarraighe Luachra dó .i. do Alltraighibh Caille do shundradh B.*

<sup>105</sup> See Donncha Ó Corráin, 'Studies in West Munster History', *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society*, 2 (1969), 29–30.

<sup>106</sup> 'Ó Riain, Notes'. The Corcu Duibne are perhaps given a prominent role because of the tradition that Altraige was in Corcu Duibne, see Ó Riain, *Corpus*, p. 22 § 127.1: *Do Chiarraige Luachra, do Altraighe Cind Bera 7 do Chorcu Duibni*. See also *Corpus*, p. 165, § 716.1, which gives his ancestry as belonging to the *Ciarraigi Luachra do Alltraige Chaille*. Airde mac Fidaig, whose name is given in full in the Irish versions of the *Life*, also belonged to the Corcu Duibne according to one set of manuscripts containing his genealogy, see Ó Riain, *Corpus*, 36, § 211: *m. Cormaic Fhind m. Cuirc Duibh(ne)*. Cnoc Bhréanainn 'Brandon Mountain' is also in Corcu Duibne.

<sup>107</sup> L 3449–83, B §§ 18, 19, 20; 'Ó Riain, Notes'.

<sup>108</sup> L 3393–99; § 11.

tres: (1) the North West Kerry area around Ardfert and Ratoos; (2) the South Clare area around Ennis; (3) Clonfert; and (4) Annaghdown. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the extra incidents in the *Betha* have to do with these areas. In one brief incident in the early part of the *Life*, for example, the *Betha* has reference to three wethers jumping from the well in which Brendan was baptised. These were Brendan's baptism fees.<sup>109</sup> The well in question is almost certainly Tobar na Molt in the townland of Tubbrid, near Ardfert.<sup>110</sup> There is also an interpolation in the latter part of the *Second Irish Life* which is concerned with the south Clare area. It deals with Brendan's role of imposing taboos on a local family called the Uí Dobharchon who held lands at Dubhdhoire, now Doorra, the parish which adjoins Clareabbey in the barony of Bunratty.<sup>111</sup> This suggests perhaps a possible Augustinian/Clareabbey connection with the *Second Irish Life*.<sup>112</sup>

We have touched earlier on the role of Saint Iarlaithe in the *Life*. This reflects the relationship between Tuam and Annaghdown, the purpose being to show that while Tuam was subservient to Annaghdown, the churches were united.<sup>113</sup> Tuam did not officially become the principal see of Connacht until after the Synod of Kells-Mellifont (1152), and Annaghdown only became a diocesan centre in its own right during the last quarter of the twelfth century at the Synod of Dublin in 1192. Since Brendan's *Life* implies that Annaghdown and

<sup>109</sup> L 3374–9; B § 8.

<sup>110</sup> O'Donoghue, *Brendaniana*, 48; 'Ó Riain, Notes'.

<sup>111</sup> B §§ 162–4.

<sup>112</sup> 'Ó Riain, Notes'. Another possible Augustinian connection is referred to by Professor Ó Riain in his Notes. B § 160 relates that Brendan went to Inbher Nis in Cliach to rid the inhabitants of a plague of fleas. In the corresponding passage in D (M T), the name is given as '*castrum Briugu*', that is, the townland of 'Bruis', barony of Clanwilliam, Co. Tipperary. According to the seventeenth century Petty Survey, 'Bruis' belonged to the McGrath family and, according to D. Gleason and A. Gwynn, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, vol. 1 (Dublin 1962), the Augustinian Abbey of Clare ('de Forgio') had mostly McGraths as abbots in the period of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As pointed out above in our discussion of the *Fis Adomnán* interpolation, Canons Island, a dependency of Clare, was founded on the Feast of Peter and Paul, and Annaghdown, Clonfert, Clare and Ratoos all had Augustinian houses. Note also that Brendan celebrated the Feast of Saint Peter while at sea, see B § 143.

<sup>113</sup> See B § 206.

Tuam were united at the time of writing, and since a date in the twelfth century is not precluded by the linguistic evidence, I am inclined to concur with Professor Ó Riain's view that 'a date of composition between c. 1150 and c. 1190 would appear likely.'<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> 'Ó Riain, Notes'. If the *Betha* was composed in its present form between these dates, it may have some bearing on the date to be ascribed to the interpolator H in LU. *Scéla Laí Brátha* is in the hand of H while the first ten lines of *Fis Adomnán*, which precedes it, is the hand of A, the remainder in that of M. Various dates ranging from c. 1100 to the thirteenth century have been ascribed to H, see T. Ó Concheanainn, 'The Reviser of Leabhar na hUidhre', *Éigse* 15 (1973–74), 277–88, 'Leabhar na hUidhre: Further textual associations', *Éigse* 30 (1997), 27–91 (80–89). If it is assumed that the description of Paradise contained in the *Betha* has been copied from the LU text of SLB rather than from a later lost copy (or that it is based on a familiarity with a set description of Paradise), the interpolator could not have worked at a date later than c. 1190. Furthermore, the *Fis Adomnán* interpolation in the *Betha* means that the latter in its present form cannot be earlier than the date assigned to the *Fis*.

In addition to the version of this paper presented at the Lake Garda Conference, further versions were read at a research seminar held in the Celtic Section, Engelska Institutionen, University of Uppsala, in June 2003, and at a postgraduate seminar held at the Institute for Irish and Celtic Studies, University of Ulster, Coleraine, in February 2004. I am grateful to all who contributed to the discussions at the various venues, to the editors of the present volume and to Professor Pádraig Ó Riain.

NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI. SOME POSSIBLE  
CONNECTIONS WITH LITURGICAL, APOCRYPHAL  
AND IRISH TRADITION

Martin McNamara

After reading the recently published Bibliography of the legend of Saint Brendan by Glyn S. Burgess and Clara Strijbosch,<sup>1</sup> I came to the conclusion that certain areas of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* still merited examination: for instance, the biblical text used, aspects of the Divine Office and some liturgical feasts apparently familiar to the author, the tradition within which the account of Judas's respite from Hell may have originated, the question of the possible influence the apocryphal *Visio Pauli* might have had on the author of the *Navigatio* and on Irish voyage literature in general with regard to the concept of the Land of Promise and on the terminology used to describe it. The *Navigatio*, like many literary classics, is in the nature of an archeological mound or tell, awaiting to be fully excavated in due time. In this process it is useful to cut some trenches into the mound, analyze the evidence and then consider if certain lines of enquiry merit further exploration. This essay is thus presented as 'work in progress.'<sup>2</sup>

1. *Navigatio sancti Brendani: Biblical Psalter text*

The author of the *Navigatio* shows a particular interest in the Divine Office and in the opening words of psalms recited in it. In all there are about thirty-six such Psalter texts. The biblical text used by a

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<sup>1</sup> G. S. Burgess and C. Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> In this study the Latin text used is that of C. Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana): University of Notre Dame Press, 1959 (Publications in Mediaeval Studies, 16). English translations are from that of John J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan. Journey to the Promised Land. Navigatio sancti Brendani Abbatis*, Mountrath (Portlaoise): Dolmen Press (Dolmen Press, 1); Atlantic Highlands (NJ): Humanities Press, 1976, and later reprints by various publishers.

given writer can often give very valuable information regarding affiliations of a work, sometimes even with regard to the particular country or area in which it was composed. This could hold true in a special way for the Psalter biblical text. In Europe of the early Middle Ages two major texts were still being used, namely the Vulgate (*Gallicanum*) and the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*), both of which circulated in different recensions. There was an Irish family of Vulgate texts, referred to in the critical edition of the Vulgate under the symbols CI (the *Cathach* of Saint Columba and another text). Specific readings or variant readings in the *Navigatio* might conceivably help us to identify the cultural affiliations of the work.

With this end in view, I examined all the Psalter texts used and collated them with the critical editions of both the Vulgate and Old Latin. Most of the texts are brief and identical to both the Vulgate and Old Latin. Not always, however. There are instances in which the two are clearly distinct, and in those cases the text of the *Navigatio* agrees with the Vulgate against the Old Latin. With regard to the Vulgate texts used in the *Navigatio*, in none of them is there any significant variant reading within the Vulgate family of texts. Its text has no particular affiliation with the Vulgate Irish family (CI) or with any other. This being the case, the biblical Psalter text has no light to shed on the place of composition of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*.

## 2. *The Divine Office in the Navigatio*

### 2.1. *Origin and Formation of the Divine Office*

It is clear the author of the *Navigatio* had a particular interest in the Divine Office, in the Liturgy of the Hours or rather in the psalms chanted or recited at particular hours. The thirty-six or so incipits of Psalter texts given make this evident. While he has occasional references to other elements of the Liturgy of the Hours (for instance *alleluia*, *oracio*), the author shows no interest in elements such as the hymns which, one can presume, formed part of the Divine Office in his day, whether the date of composition be early (eighth century) or later (tenth/eleventh century).

A reconstruction of the Divine Office from the elements provided by the text of the *Navigatio* and a comparison of this against forms of the Liturgy of the Hours as known to us from Eastern and Western



sources might help identify the religious or monastic community to which the author did, or indeed did not, belong.

A major step in the formation of the tradition of the Liturgy of the Hours, in both the East and West, came with the so-called Peace of Constantine in 312. With this, the Church acquired the freedom to develop the public and external aspects of its life. Then began to develop the public prayer of the Church, in which the Psalter played a central role. Two forms of the Divine Office took shape, the one, the Cathedral Office, intended for the laity, the other, monastic, for monks. A rich and varied tradition soon developed. The Church historian Socrates, in his *Church History* (written between 439 and 450), speaking of the first post-Nicene century (324–425), says that 'it would be impossible to find anywhere among all the sects, two churches that agree in their prayer ritual'.<sup>3</sup> The tradition of Cathedral and monastic Office developed rapidly in the East—in Palestine (Bethlehem, St Jerome), Antioch and in the monastic communities of Lower and Upper Egypt. John Cassian, born in Scythia Minor (present-day Romania), went to Egypt as a young monk and lived there from about 380 to 399. He was well informed of the customs of the East and was highly impressed by the Egyptian tradition of the Divine Office. In Books II and III of his *Institutes* (written about 417–25) he gives a lengthy account of the Egyptian Offices. It is recognized, however, that in the *Institutes* Cassian is not so much attempting a history of Egyptian monasticism as a reform of Gallic monasticism along Egyptian lines. His description of the Egyptian Office (or rather Offices) is rather an idealized one.

The knowledge of the Eastern, and in particular the Egyptian, Divine Office traditions was introduced to the West by Cassian, and the monastery of Lerins founded by his disciple Honoratus. In the West, while there was monasticism in Northern Italy, Rome and Campania by the end of the fourth century, apart from general references to psalmody and vigils, our sources give no information on the structure of monastic prayer there for that earlier period. In Gaul the oldest monastic cursus for such prayer was that legislated for by Cassian for his monastery of Saint Victor in Marseilles and for the monastery of Lerins founded by Honoratus (d. 429–30).

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<sup>3</sup> Socrates, *Church History*, V.22, cited in R. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West. The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning Today*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1985, 31.

Cassian's system was adopted and transformed in the monastic rules of Saint Caesarius, a monk at Lerins and later bishop of Arles from 502 to 542, and by his second successor Saint Aurelian, bishop of Arles 546–51, who also wrote rules for the monasteries he founded there. From Italy, from the first quarter of the sixth century we have the *Rule of the Master* (probably from Catania), with its own structure of the Canonical Hours. Together with the Roman Office then current, the *Rule of the Master* significantly influenced Saint Benedict in the composition of his own Rule around 530–60. For the West, Benedict was to present the final synthesis of the structure of the Hours, which was to supersede almost all others in the ninth century.

The origins and history of the Divine Office in Ireland still remain to be written.<sup>4</sup> In keeping with European tradition there were probably different systems. The best known of these is the monastic cursus of Columbanus (543–615), in chapter 7 of his *Regula Monachorum* and in his *Regula Coenobialis*, chapter 9. The *Rule of Benedict* provides for the reading of the entire Psalter once a week, but Saint Benedict recalls (*Rule*, ch. 18) that the early Fathers recited the whole Psalter in a single day. R. Taft remarks that Columban's winter cycle comes closer to this presumed ancient ideal than any other source he knows.<sup>5</sup> Others see influences both from East and West in the Irish tradition.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> There may be a generally neglected piece of evidence on the Irish office in a partly legible text in the Book of Mulling (drawn to our attention more recently by E. de Bhaldraithe, 'The Bangor Antiphony', *Hallel. A Review of Monastic Spirituality and Liturgy* [Mount Mellary Abbey, Waterford, Ireland], 13 (1985), 164–70, at 168). The text has been published and studied by H. Lawlor, *Chapters on the Book of Mulling*, Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1897, 145–66 ('The Liturgical Fragment'). This text comes at the end of the Gospel of John, and is in the same hand as that of the main text, early ninth century. In Lawlor's words (p. 161): 'We have recovered in these obscure, scarcely legible lines of the book of Mulling a sketch of—or, to use a more technical word, a kind of directory for—what appears to have been a daily office used night or morning in the monastery of St Moling of Ferns in the early part of the 9th century'. It must be admitted, however, that the piece is of limited value since it has no indication of any of the psalms used.

<sup>5</sup> Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> Thus P. Jeffery, 'Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours', an unpublished paper referred to by R. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, 115, note 44. The essay has since been published, but has come to my attention only after completion of this paper: Peter Jeffery, 'Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours', in: M. E. Passler and R. A. Baltzer, ed., *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages. Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography. Written in Honor of Professor Ruth Steiner*, New York and Oxford 2000, 99–143. A summary of the 2000 essay by Michel Huglo and Barbara Haggh in *Peritia. Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, 15 (2001), 434–437.

## 2.2. *The Divine Office in the Navigatio*

With this introduction, we may pass to the evidence of the *Navigatio*. There is a rather detailed presentation of the Liturgy of the Hours in two chapters, with a somewhat summary account in a third text. The first occurs in chapter 11, in the context of the celebration of Easter and its Octave on the Island of the Birds. The most detailed account is in chapter 17, in a non-festal general setting on the Island of the Three Choirs. I first give this latter text.

### a. ch. 17. *The Island of the Three Choirs or Anchorites*

Brendan and his monks arrive on the island after the hour of Terce. The *Navigatio* then gives the canonical hours over the next twenty-four hours as follows: *sexta*, *ad horam nonam*, *ad uesperas*, *ad uigilias matutinas*, when day dawned (*cum dies illucescisset*), *ad tertiam*. There is here no mention of Compline (*completorium*). I give the relevant text from this chapter in O'Meara's translation (with Psalm references and corresponding Latin text added).<sup>7</sup>

It was about ten o'clock (*hora quarta*) when they put in at the landing-place on the island. When **mid-day** came (*cum autem sexta uenisset*) all the choirs began to chant together saying: 'May God be merciful to us [. . .]' (Ps. 66:2), to the end of the psalm, and 'Be pleased. O God, to deliver me [. . .]' (*Deus in adiutorium meum*, Ps. 69:2), and likewise the third of three psalms for **sext**: 'I kept my faith [. . .]' (Ps. 115:1) and the prayer for mercy as above (*similiter et tertium psalmum 'Credidi', et oracionem ut supra*). Likewise at three o'clock (*similiter ad horam nonam*) they chanted another three psalms: 'Out of the depths' (Ps. 129:1), and 'Behold how good' (Ps. 132:1), and 'Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem' (Ps. 147:12). At **vespers** (*ad uesperas*) they chanted: 'A hymn is due to thee, O God, in Zion' (Ps. 64:2), and 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord, my God' (Ps. 103:1), and the third of the psalms for **vespers** (*et tertium psalmum 'Laudate pueri Dominum'*) 'Praise the Lord, children' (Ps. 112:1). They then chanted, while seated, the gradual psalms (*et quindecim gradus cantabant sedendo*). When they had finished this chant, a cloud of extraordinary brightness covered the island, but now they could no longer see what they had seen, because of the denseness of the cloud. Nevertheless they continued to hear the voices of those singing their ordinary chant without interruption until **matins** (*usque ad uigilias matutinas*). Then the choirs began to chant, singing: 'Praise the Lord from the heavens' (Ps. 148:1), then 'Sing to the Lord' (149:1), and the third of the psalms of matins (*et*

<sup>7</sup> O'Meara, transl., *The Voyage*, 44–45.

*tercium* 'Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius') 'Praise the Lord in his saints' (Ps. 150:1). After that they chanted twelve psalms in the order of the Psalter (*per ordinem psalterii*). When day dawned (*cum dies illucessisset*) the island was cloudless and immediately they chanted the three psalms: 'Have mercy on me, O God' (Ps. 50:1), 'God, my God, from dawn I keep watch for thee' (Ps. 62:2), and 'Lord, my refuge' (*Domine, refugium*, Ps. 89:1). At **terce** (*ad terciam*) they chanted another three psalms, that is: 'All peoples' (Ps. 46:2), and 'God, in your name' (Ps. 53:3), and the third, 'I have loved, because' (Ps. 114:1), with the Alleluia. They then offered the Spotless Lamb and all came to communion.

b. *ch. 11. In the Island of the Birds; Feast of Easter and the Octave*

The second text, for Easter, is on the Island of the Birds, and the Office is given as recited by birds. The Office begins at Vespers, after which we are taken through to None of the following day, in the sequence: Vespers (*uespertina hora*), midnight (*usque ad **terciam uigiliam noctis***), Vespers (*ad uesperas*), dawn (*cum aurora refulsisset*), matins and lauds (*in **matutinis laudibus***), terce (***ad terciam horam***), sext (***ad sextam***), none (*ad **nonam***). The text is as follows:<sup>8</sup>

When the hour of **vespers** (*uespertina hora*) had come, all the birds in the tree chanted, as it were with one voice, beating their wings on their sides: 'A hymn is due to thee, O God, in Zion, and a vow shall be paid to you in Jerusalem' (Ps. 64:1). And they kept repeating this versicle for about the space of an hour [. . .]. Then Saint Brendan said to his brothers: 'Repair your bodies, for today our souls are filled with divine food'. When supper was over they performed the divine service (*ceperunt opus Dei peragere*). When all was finished, the man of God and his companions gave repose to their bodies until **midnight** (*usque ad **terciam uigiliam noctis***). Waking, the man of God aroused his brothers for the vigil of the holy night (*ad uigilias noctis sancte*), beginning with the versicle: 'Lord, open my lips'. When the holy man had finished, all the birds responded with wing and mouth saying: 'Praise the Lord, all his angels, praise him all his powers' (Ps. 148:2). So it was as for **vespers** (*similiter et ad uesperas*)—they chanted all the time for the space of an hour. When **dawn** rose (*cum aurora refulsisset*) they chanted: 'May the radiance of the Lord, our God, be upon us!' (Ps. 89:17)—with the same tune and for the same length of time as at **matins** and **lauds** (*equali modulatione et longitudine psallendi sicut et in **matutinis laudibus***). Likewise at **terce** (***ad terciam horam***) they chanted the versicle: 'Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Sing praises to our king. Sing praises in wisdom' (Ps. 46:7). At **sext** (***ad sextam***) they chanted: 'Shine your countenance, Lord, upon us, and have mercy on us' (Ps. 46:2). At

<sup>8</sup> O'Meara, transl., *The Voyage*, 21–23.

**nones** (**ad nonam**) they chanted: 'How good and pleasant it is that brothers live together as one!' (Ps. 132:1). In this way, day and night, the birds gave praise to the Lord. And so Saint Brendan refreshed his brothers with the feast of Easter until the octave day'.

c. *ch. 12. The Community of Ailbe*

The third text, on the Island of the Community of Ailbe, is of a general nature. In this text there is mention of *tempus missarum aut uigiliarum* 12, line 66; *intremus in ecclesiam et cantemus uesperas* [. . .] *ut fratres nostri possint ad tempus cantare uesperas post nos* (12, 79–81); *debitum uespertinale* (12, 82). I cite the relevant sections.

When they had finished the office of **vespers** (*debitum uespertinale*) (12, 82) Saint Brendan examined how the church was built [. . .].<sup>9</sup>

While Saint Brendan was reflecting on all these matters within himself, the abbot spoke to him: 'Father, it is now time to return to the refectory so that all we have to do will be done while there is light'. This they did in the same way as before. When they had completed the day's course in order (*secundum ordinem cursus diei*), they all hurried with great eagerness to **compline** (*ad completorium*). When the abbot had intoned the versicle: 'God, come to my aid,' and had together given honour to the Trinity, they began to chant the versicle: 'We have acted wrongly, we have done iniquity! You, Lord, who are our faithful father, spare us. I shall sleep in peace therefore and shall take my rest; for you, Lord, have placed me, singularly, in hope.' (cf. Ps. 4:9–10). After this they chanted the office of the hour (*cantabant officium quod pertinet ad hanc horam*). When the order of psalms had been completed (*iam consummato ordine psallendi*), all went out of the church [. . .].<sup>10</sup>

d. *The Day Hours in the Navigatio and the Antiphony of Bangor*

Much more research is necessary before one can say how, if at all, the overall cursus of the Divine Office of the *Navigatio* relates to Irish tradition. All that can be done here is to present some of the basic evidence. With regards to the Day Hours, matters may be different. In his study of the *Antiphony of Bangor* Michael Curran makes a special study of the form and content of the Day Hours of the *Navigatio* in connection with the *Antiphony of Bangor* and the office of Columbanus.<sup>11</sup> With regard to the text of chapter 17 of the *Navigatio*

<sup>9</sup> O'Meara, transl., *The Voyage*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> O'Meara, transl., *The Voyage*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> M. Curran, 'Form and Content of the Day Hours; The Three Psalms', in: M. Curran, *The Antiphony of Bangor and the Early Irish Monastic Liturgy*, Blackrock (Co. Dublin): Irish Academic Press, 1984, ch. 21, 169–73.

he notes that 'the author of the *Navigatio* situates the events about which he speaks in the context of the liturgical year, by dating them from Easter, or Pentecost, or Christmas. The event narrated in this first story happened in October or November, so that the office described is not connected with any special liturgical season'.<sup>12</sup> He comments on the text of *Navigatio* chapter 11 that 'the event narrated here is situated on Easter Sunday. But the office described agrees with that in the first story (*Navigatio* ch. 17) and it has no exclusively Paschal character'.<sup>13</sup> He concludes thus:<sup>14</sup>

The total agreement of this office [of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*], on the one hand, and the office of Columban and of the Antiphony, in so far as they describe the psalmody of the day hours [named in the Antiphony as *secunda*, *tertia*, *sexta*, *nona*, and *vespertina*], on the other hand, suggests that the office of the *Navigatio* was not confined to just one monastery, and that possibly the day hours at Bangor in the seventh century were celebrated as described for us in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*.

In a review of Curran's work Peter Jeffery expresses reservations. He comments:<sup>15</sup>

The Rule of Columban tells us how many psalms were sung at the different hours, but does not indicate any specific psalms as the *Navigatio s. Brendani* does. The Bangor Antiphony gives almost no information about the number and choice of psalms, but does preserve evidence

<sup>12</sup> Curran, *The Antiphony*, 252 (note 9 to chapter 21).

<sup>13</sup> Curran, *The Antiphony*, 252 (note 10 to chapter 21).

<sup>14</sup> Curran, *The Antiphony*, 172.

<sup>15</sup> P. Jeffery, in: *Worship* 59 (1985), 439–41 (at 440–41). Jeffery goes into the matter in greater detail in his later (2000) essay, 'Eastern and Western Elements'. He treats of Columban (Columbanus) in his section 'The Offices of the Irish Monasteries on the Continent', pp. 110–112, and of 'The Bangor Antiphoner and its Allies' (and the Antiphony relation to Columbanus), on pp. 112–127. He argues strongly for composition of the Bangor Antiphony on the Continent rather than in Ireland. It was at Bobbio that the manuscript was discovered in the sixteenth century, and the textual content offers reason to think the Irishmen who created it were actually working on the Continent, if not at Bobbio itself (p. 113; similarly p. 127). Jeffery examines the *Navigatio S. Brendani* evidence in his section 'Offices derived from Cassian' (pp. 108–110). He regards the *Navigatio* as an eighth-century work recording a fictional voyage of St Brendan. The Offices presented in the *Navigatio* conflate Cassian's two traditions (the Palestinian and the Egyptian) into a single ordo. We do not know whether the Offices described in the *Navigatio S. Brendani* were ever actually celebrated by anyone, since the work is a fiction. But the tension evident at Vespers, between the prescriptions of Cassian on the one hand and the practices of known Gallican centres on the other, can also be seen in the usages of the seventh century Irish monasteries on the Continent (p. 110).

regarding the canticles, which are not mentioned in the other two sources. Is it really certain that these three documents preserve substantially the same office? The author thinks so (pp. 166, 169). But Columban was very aware of a multiplicity of customs, and there is no reason to believe that his Rule describes a 'pure' Irish office, uninfluenced by the practices of Gaul where he spent most of his time. With sources as early, obscure and eclectic as the Irish ones are, it seems far safer to assume variety and divergence when there is not explicit uniformity.

Thus the evidence from a study of the texts on the Divine Office in the *Navigatio* can scarcely be used for or against composition of the work in Ireland. One matter, however, is clear: the cursus of the *Navigatio* clearly does not belong to that in *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. In Benedict's cursus the psalms for Terce, Sext and None are from Ps. 118, and Pss 119–27. Likewise, the psalms for the other hours are different from those of the *Navigatio*. Thus, if the *Navigatio* originated on the Continent, rather than in Ireland, it is unlikely that this was in a community of the Benedictine Rule.

### 3. *The Liturgical Feasts: Epiphany (Theophania), Assumption*

#### 3.1. *The Epiphany (Epiphania, Theophania)*

When Brendan and his companions came upon Judas on a rock on the Lord's day, Judas explains that on that rock he has a place of refreshment every Sunday from evening to evening, at Christmas until the Epiphany (*Theophania*), at Easter until Pentecost, and on the feasts of the purification and assumption of the Mother of God (*Meum uero refrigerium habeo hic omni die domenco a uespera usque ad uesperam, et in Natiuitate Domini usque in **Theophaniam** et a Pascha usque in Pentecosten et in Purificatione Dei Genetricis atque Assumpcione*).<sup>16</sup> In an earlier chapter (ch. 12, 145–46)<sup>17</sup> the author also used the term *Epiphania* for the same feast: *Tu debes nobiscum celebrare Natiuitatem Domini usque ad octauas **Epiphanie***. Here major liturgical feasts known to, and observed by, the author and his religious community would appear to be indicated. By *Theophania* the feast of the Epiphany (January 6) is almost certainly intended.

<sup>16</sup> *Navigatio* 25, 29–32; Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 67.

<sup>17</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 37.



The term *theophania*, as a designation for a feast, does not occur elsewhere in Irish texts (apart from the *Navigatio*), while *epiphania* does. *Theophania* as designation of the feast-day does occur in non-Irish Latin liturgical texts, e.g. *Liber Sacramentorum Engolismensis*; *Liber Sacramentorum Augustodunensis*, Anonymus Placentinus *Itinerarium*; *Liber Quare*; *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae ecclesiae ordine exscarpus*.

The matter merits further investigation. While it may be that use of the term *theophania* used in chapter 25 derives from the sources used, it more probably reflects the terminology of the author's religious community. This would seem to indicate a continental rather than an Irish origin for the *Navigatio*—unless, of course, the presence of *theophania* in the text is not original, but introduced in the process of the work's transmission.

### 3.2. *The Assumption of Mary*

Since the feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God is mentioned after that of the Purification (2 February), it can be presumed that it was celebrated later in the author's liturgical calendar, presumably on 15 August. With regard to the feast of the Assumption,<sup>18</sup> we may note that in Jerusalem, in the fourth century at the latest, there was a feast in honour of Mary on 15 August, but without any connection (apparent at least) with either the death or the assumption of the Virgin. Soon afterwards, however, the eastern emperor Mauritios (582–602) introduced a feast in honour of the *koimêsis* (*dormitio*) of Mary, to be celebrated on 15 August. Through Byzantine influence this celebration reached Rome c. 650, and under the title *Adsumptio (Mariae)*.

There was also another tradition in the West, which continued for some time later in Gaul. We have evidence that from the beginning of the sixth century there was a feast on 18 January under the title *Festivitas sanctae Mariae*. What was being celebrated was the death of the Virgin, as is indicated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: XV

<sup>18</sup> On this feast see H. Thurston, 'The Feast of the Assumption', *The Month*, 130 (1917), 121–34; C. F. Lee, 'The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 54 (1939), 176–87; B. Capelle, 'La fête de l'Assomption dans l'histoire', *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*, 3 (1926), 33–45; M. Righetti, *Storia liturgica*, vol. 2, *L'Anno liturgico; il Breviario*, 2nd ed., riveduta e corretta, Milano: Ancora, 1955, 'L'Assunzione', 281–91.



*Ka. Feb. depositio sanctae Mariae*, a date on which the death of Mary was also celebrated in the Coptic liturgy.

It is on this day, 18 January, that the *Martyrology of Oengus* (c. 800) celebrates Mary's death:

Mórad Petair apstail  
i rRóim, rád as díxu,  
lassin lith as úaisliu  
bás [variant in MS R<sup>2</sup> *tasc*] mór máthar Íssu<sup>19</sup>

(The magnifying in Rome of the Apostle Peter  
—a saying that is higher—  
at the festival that is nobler,  
the great death [variant: tidings] of Jesu's Mother.)<sup>20</sup>

The entry for 18 January in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* (c. 800) is in keeping with that of the *Féilire Óengusso*:

*Sanctae Mariae matris Domini. Hoc die eius dormitatio in Roma audita est.*<sup>21</sup>

([The feast of] Holy Mary, the mother of the Lord. On this day [tidings of] her falling asleep were heard in Rome.)

Under Roman influence, the celebration of the *Adsumptio Mariae* spread. Even in Gaul the old title *Nativitas sanctae Mariae* was changed to *Adsumptio s. Mariae*, even though the feast continued to be celebrated on 18 January. Gradually, however, and from the eighth century onwards at the latest, it would appear, the celebration was changed to 15 August, and under the title *Assumptio*.

In the *Féilire Óengusso* under 15 August there is no explicit mention of the Assumption of Mary. There was, however, on that day a 'great feast' in her honour, expressed in the *Féilire* as follows:

I mórfhéil a aithmit  
firmáthir ar nathar  
co slóg rí, rán clochar  
Fer dá chrích, cáin cathar.<sup>22</sup>

(On the great feast of her commemoration  
very Mother of our Father.

<sup>19</sup> W. Stokes, ed., *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé. The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, London 1905 (Henry Bradshaw Society, 29), 36.

<sup>20</sup> Stokes, ed., *Féilire Óengusso*, 36; glosses 46–47.

<sup>21</sup> R. I. Best and H. J. Lawlor, ed., *The Martyrology of Tallaght from the Book of Leinster, and MS. 5100–5104 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, London 1931 (Henry Bradshaw Society, 68), 9.

<sup>22</sup> In Stokes, ed., *Féilire Óengusso*, 176.

with a host of kings, right splendid assembly!  
 Fer dá chrich, a fair champion.)

For August 16 (*D. xvii. cal. Septembris*), we may note, among other commemorations, the *Martyrology of Oengus* has one on Mary's birth:<sup>23</sup>

gein Maire, mind núagbailc,  
 nóebmáthir mo rímaicc.

(The nativity of Mary, a virginal, strong diadem,  
 the holy Mother of my Prince.)

A gloss (probably from the eleventh century) in the *Féilire Óengusso* on *gein Maire* for the commemoration of 16 August reads: *gein Maire* ('the birth of Mary') *dormitatio Mariae*.<sup>24</sup> The purport or purpose of the gloss is not quite clear. It may contain an explicit reference to the feast of the Dormition or Assumption of Mary, and possibly an indication that both the birth and assumption were celebrated or commemorated on the same day, 16 August.

The *Martyrology of Tallaght* has no entry on Mary under 15 August. However, for the preceding day, August 14 (*.xix. kl. Septimbir*) it has:

*Assumptio Mariae Virginis*.<sup>25</sup>

Then for August 16 (as in The *Martyrology of Oengus*) the *Martyrology of Tallaght* commemorates Mary's birth with the entry:

*Nativitas sanctae Mariae*.<sup>26</sup>

The celebration of the feast of 15 August is more clearly presented in the *Martyrology of Gorman*, composed in Ireland about 1170. By then the feast of 15 August had a vigil (14 August): *Vigilia mor maire* ('The great vigil of Mary'). The commemoration on August 15 apparently had the title *étsecht* 'departure' (Transitus?). The relevant entry for August 15 in the *Martyrology of Gorman* reads:<sup>27</sup>

Etsecht Maire moire  
 mathair Ísu ind fhirógh,  
 co deimhin fris ndaláb [. . .]

<sup>23</sup> In Stokes, ed., *Féilire Óengusso*, 176.

<sup>24</sup> In Stokes, ed., *Féilire Óengusso*, 186.

<sup>25</sup> Best and Lawlor, ed., *Martyrology of Tallaght*, 63.

<sup>26</sup> Best and Lawlor, ed., *Martyrology of Tallaght*, 63.

<sup>27</sup> Best and Lawlor, ed., *Martyrology of Tallaght*, 63; W. Stokes, ed., *Féilire hUí Gormáin. The Martyrology of Gorman*, London 1895 (Henry Bradshaw Society, 9), 156–57.

(The death of great Mary,  
 Jesu's mother, the true virgin,  
 whom surely I shall meet [...].)

It is not altogether clear what inference is to be drawn from this evidence with regard to a feast of the Assumption of Mary in the early Irish Church. The *Martyrologies of Oengus* and of *Tallaght* (both from c. 800) agree in assigning a celebration of the Birth of Mary to 16 August. This is somewhat surprising as the feast of the Birth of Mary appears to have been well established in the western Church from the eighth century onwards, but on 8 September. Both these martyrologies also mention a celebration of the death of Mary (or news of her death) at Rome on 18 January. The *Martyrology of Oengus* knows of celebration of a 'great feast' (unnamed) of Mary on 15 August. The *Martyrology of Tallaght* gives 14 August as date for the celebration of the feast of Mary's Assumption, while the twelfth-century *Martyrology of Gorman* celebrates Mary's death or departure (*Transitus*) on 15 August. It may be that the two feasts of Mary's birth and death (departure, *Transitus*, Assumption) were celebrated together or in close conjunction in the early and medieval Irish Church. There may be evidence for just such a joint celebration in a recently identified and edited Irish vernacular homily on both the nativity and death/departure (*etsecht*) of Mary. The section on her birth draws heavily on the apocryphal *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* while that on her departure is from the Irish translation of the apocryphal *Transitus Mariae*. The homily has been assigned by its editor Caoimhín Breatnach to the Early Middle Irish period (tenth century).<sup>28</sup>

In favour of early Irish belief in the Assumption of Mary one may adduce the belief of scholars that the form of the apocryphal *Transitus Mariae*, from which extant Irish texts derive, represents a very early form of the work, which must have come to Ireland in the seventh century.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, one might argue against any such feast of the Assumption of Mary in August from the connection made between the death of Mary (or news of this) and 18 January, together with

<sup>28</sup> Text edited by C. Breatnach, 'An Irish Homily on the Life of the Virgin Mary', *Ériu*, 51 (2000), 23–58.

<sup>29</sup> On the Irish texts of the *Transitus Mariae* see M. McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975; 1984, nr. 97, 122–23.

the lack of any mention of the Assumption with the celebration of 15 August in the *Martyrology of Oengus*. In fact, lack of belief in Mary's Assumption in early Ireland might seem implied in what Adamnán says about Mary's burial place in *De locis sanctis* I, 12. There Adamnán reports Arculf's account of Mary's tomb in the Valley of Josaphat, followed by comments which are probably from Adamnán himself. Adamnán's text reads:

In the eastern portion (of the church) is an altar, and at the right-hand side of the altar is the empty stone sepulchre of the holy Mary, where she was once laid to rest. But how, or when, or by what persons her holy remains were removed from the sepulchre, or where she awaits the resurrection, no one, as is said, knows for certain.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion we may say that while the *Navigatio* presupposes the Assumption of the Mother of God as a major celebration, the status, or even the existence, of such a feast in the early Irish Church is not altogether clear. The evidence as now available to us can hardly be used for or against composition of the *Navigatio* in Ireland itself.

#### 4. *Respite for Judas and the damned in the Navigatio sancti Brendani and in apocryphal tradition*

Chapter 25 of the *Navigatio* is on 'The Unhappy Judas', who is presented as a man sitting on a rock. As already noted above, on that rock, Judas says, he had a place of refreshment every Sunday from evening to evening, at Christmas until the Epiphany (*Theophania*), at Easter until Pentecost, and on the feasts of the Purification and Assumption of the Mother of God (*Meum uero refrigerium habeo hic omni die doménico a uespera usque ad uesperam, et in Natiuitate Domini usque in **Theophaniam** et a Pascha usque in Pentecosten et in Purificatione Dei Genetricis atque Assumpcione*; *Navigatio* 25, 29–32).<sup>31</sup> Before and after this respite, he says he is tormented in the depth of Hell with Herod, Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas. He implores Brendan and his companions to intercede with the Lord Jesus Christ for him that he be

<sup>30</sup> Adamnán's *De Locis sanctis*, ed. D. Meehan and L. Bieler, Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 3), 58–59 (Latin text with English translation). See also Meehan's note to the text.

<sup>31</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, p. 67; translation O'Meara, *The Voyage*, 57–58.

able to remain on the rock until sunrise on the morrow (*ad ortum solis cras*; 25, 34–35). As eventide darkens the sea, the demons come to carry him back to Hell, but Brendan tells them that the Lord Jesus Christ had granted Judas permission to pass the night on the rock until morning (*usque mane*; 25, 55–56). When that night had passed, early in the morning (*transacta itaque illa nocte, primo mane*) the demons took Judas away (25, 60).

A number of questions arise with regard to these texts, for instance: what is the background to the Sunday respite for Judas?; why does he seek an extension?; and why precisely over Sunday night, to early Monday morning?; what is the background to the respites extended beyond Sunday? Then there is the question as to what message, if any, the author of the *Navigatio* intends to convey in this Judas episode.

It appears that the text is directly or indirectly related to what the *Visio Pauli* has to say on the temporary respite from Hell for the souls of the damned. Since we will have occasion to speak of the *Visio Pauli* in some detail again in the course of this paper, we may note here that the original of the Latin *Visio Pauli*, namely the Greek *Apocalypse of Paul*, was composed in Egypt, and in the third century if not slightly earlier. A copy of the early Greek edition was brought to Asia Minor from which an expanded text (known as the Tarsus text) was made in the early fifth century. The Western tradition of the work descends from a Latin translation of the Greek in its second edition.<sup>32</sup> The best witness to the second edition of the Greek text is the fuller Latin version, extant in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (nouv. acq. lat. 1631; 9th century). The Latin translation must have been made soon after the Greek original. It was used in the *Regula Magistri*, written in Italy, south-east of Rome c. 500–25. It was also known to Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–c. 550), and in France to Caesarius of Arles (c. 470–542). The *Visio* was extremely influential in the West. In the words of Theodore Silverstein, the *Visio* became ‘one of the chief formative elements in the developments of the later legends of Heaven and Hell which culminated in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante’.<sup>33</sup> It is

<sup>32</sup> See Theodore Silverstein and Anthony Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul. A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions*, Genève: Patrick Cramer Éditeur, 1997 (Cahiers d’Orientalisme, 21), 11–12.

<sup>33</sup> Th. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli. The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts*, London 1935 (Studies and Documents, 4), 3. See also Peter Dinzelbacher,

known to have influenced the *Vision of Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, and also the *Vision of Adamnán*, the *Visio Tnugdali*, and probably other Irish texts besides.

The *Visio Pauli* is a lengthy work, with fifty-one chapters, which are generally grouped in seven sections according to subject matter. An indication of its popularity in the Latin West is that, together with the three or four long versions, eleven shorter recensions (or redactions as they are generally referred to) are known, in which much of the material of the long versions is omitted. The most popular of all the shorter texts was Recension IV (with Paul's visit to Hell), which seems to have been known all over western Europe. Apart from the distinctive Redaction VI, of which two ninth-century manuscripts are known, and Redaction XI extant in one ninth/tenth-century manuscript, the earliest manuscripts of the redactions are from the eleventh century. With regard to its transmission in Ireland, it would be desirable to ascertain what evidence there is for its use there from earlier times, and also whether the full recension was known.<sup>34</sup> Answers to such questions remain for future research.

Chapters 31–44 of the *Visio* describe Paul's visitation of Hell in the company of the archangel Michael. Towards the end of this visit (ch. 44) the damned petition mercy from Michael, from the just on earth and from Paul. To this request Jesus replies (*Visio Pauli* 44, end): 'Now because of Michael the archangel of my covenant and the angels that are with him, and because of Paul my dearly beloved whom I would not grieve, and because of your brethren that are in the world and do offer oblations, and because of your sons, for in them are my commandments, and yet more because of my own goodness: **on the day whereon I rose from the dead I grant all of you that are in torment refreshment for a day and a night for ever**'.<sup>35</sup>

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'Die Verbreitung der apokryphen "Visio S. Pauli" im mittelalterlichen Europa', *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch*, 27 (1992), 77–90. On the *Visio* see also M. McNamara, *The Apocrypha*, no. 91 (pp. 105–06).

<sup>34</sup> There is evidence that the long Latin version was known in England to Aldhelm (late seventh century) and to Aelfric (c. 1000); see Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, Cambridge: University Press, 1993 (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England), 108. We can thus presume that it was known also in Ireland.

<sup>35</sup> *Visio Pauli*, ch. 44; transl. M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, 546.

By the day Jesus rose from the dead, every Sunday, rather than Easter Sunday alone, is probably intended. And even if not originally intended as Sunday by the original author, the text could very easily be interpreted in this sense, as it is in the long Latin text of St Gall, MS 317, 9th century<sup>2</sup>, where the Sunday reference is made clear: *dono uobis* [. . .] *noctem et diem **domenicæ** refrigerium in perpetuum*.<sup>36</sup> The most natural understanding of the day and the night intended would appear to be Saturday night and Sunday, although the text could be construed (and indeed was so understood by some) as extending to early Monday.

The extent of the Sunday respite for the damned (and even its very existence) differs somewhat in various recensions of the *Visio Pauli* and in other texts making mention of the respite, such as some of the many varying forms of the *Transitus Mariae*. Before we turn to those, it should be noted that belief in this Sunday (Easter) respite for the damned may not have originated with the author of the *Visio Pauli*. It may be a Christian adaptation of the Jewish tradition of a 'Sabbath rest' for the damned.<sup>37</sup> Belief in such a respite seems to have circulated rather widely in certain Christian circles in the early fifth century. Augustine treats of this belief of a respite for the damned, without any specific reference to Sunday or Christ's resurrection. He mentions it in his *Enarratio* on Ps. 105, nr. 2, on Ps. 105:1:<sup>38</sup> '*His mercy endures until the end of the world*', or '*for ever*'. Commenting on this

<sup>36</sup> In Silverstein and Hilhorst, ed., *Apocalypse of Paul*, 162.

<sup>37</sup> See Israel Lévi, 'Le repos sabbatique des âmes damnées', *Revue des études juives*, 25 (1892), 1–13; and 'Notes complémentaires sur le repos sabbatique des âmes', *Revue des études juives*, 26 (1893), 131–35 (Jewish parallels). For Christian material see S. Merkle, 'Die Sabbatruhe in der Hölle. Ein Beitrag zur Prudentius-Erklärung und zur Geschichte der Apokryphen', *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 9 (1895), 489–505. Full and recent examination of the question, with rich bibliography, in M. Erbetta, ed., *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*. III. *Lettere e Apocalissi*, Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1969, 377–78, note 56. See also B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 121–22. Daley makes no mention of the views of Augustine or Prudentius on this matter, but notes (*The Hope*, 76) that Ephrem does allow for the possibility that God will mitigate the exercise of his justice against condemned sinners, and may allow 'some drops of water' to fall into Gehenna occasionally to refresh them. For the belief in Irish tradition see L. Gougaud, 'La croyance au répit périodique des damnés dans les légendes irlandaises', in: *Mélanges bretons et celtiques offerts à J. Loth*, Annales de Bretagne, Rennes, 1927, 63–72.

<sup>38</sup> PL 37, 1406: *Sed tolerabiliorem quosdam excepturos damnationem in quorundam compactione legimus; alicuius vero mitigari eam cui est traditus poenam, vel quibusdam intervallis habere aliquam pausam, quis audacter dixerit, quandoquidem unam stillam dives ille non meruit?* (Luke 16:24–26).

text, Augustine remarks that 'some [of the damned] will receive more tolerable condemnation than others; yet who would dare to say that the punishment to which one has been delivered will be mitigated, or have any pause for certain intervals, since the rich man was not counted worthy of one drop of water?'. In this text of the *Enarrationes* (a work completed about 416) Augustine rejects any idea of mitigation or break in the punishment. He takes a more lenient view in the *Enchiridion* (ch. 112), written in 423 for the layman Laurentius:<sup>39</sup>

It is in vain, therefore, that some, indeed, very many, out of mere human sentiment deplore the eternal punishment and the unceasing and everlasting torments of the damned, and do not believe that such things will be. [. . .] But let them believe, if they care to, that the torments of the damned are to some extent mitigated at certain intervals. Even so, the wrath of God, that is, their condemnation, [. . .] can still be understood to rest upon them. Thus, even in His wrath, that is, while His wrath endures, He would not withhold His mercies; yet, not so as to put an end to their eternal punishment, but rather to apply or to interpose some little respite from their torments.

A little earlier (c. 402) Prudentius had expressed similar sentiments in his poem *Cathemerinon*,<sup>40</sup> rather obviously dependent on the *Visio Pauli*, although he may have been thinking of Easter Sunday rather than of every Sunday.

Sunt et spiritibus saepe nocentibus  
poenarum celebres sub Styge feriae  
illa nocte, sacer qua rediit Deus  
stagnis ad superos ex Acherunticis.

(Even souls of the lost suffering in the depth of Hell  
Have some respite from pain, holding glad holiday  
On that night when the Lord came to the world above  
Up from Acheron's pool, rising to life again.)

The variety on the matter in the recensions and translations of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (*Visio Pauli*) is quite interesting. The Syriac trans-

<sup>39</sup> *Enchiridion* (*Faith, Hope and Charity*), 112; in the translation of L. A. Arand, *St. Augustine. Faith, Hope and Charity*, Westminster (Maryland): Newman Press, 1947 (Ancient Christian Writers, 3); London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947, 104–05. See also *De civitate Dei*, 21, 24, 3 (PL 47, 738–39).

<sup>40</sup> *Cathemerinon* 5, 125–28; ed. J. Bergman, CSEL 61, 1926, 30; English translation that of M. Clement Eagan, *The Poems of Prudentius*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962 (The Fathers of the Church. A New Translation, 43), 36, with reference to Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 112.



lation makes no mention of any respite. On the other hand, the Coptic version speaks of a respite for the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost (fifty days after Easter), together with the Sunday respite. This remarkable text merits citation. The relevant section of Christ's reply to the request of the damned is as follows (in the translation of E. A. Wallis Budge):<sup>41</sup>

But, for the sake of Michael and My beloved Paul, I do not wish to grieve you, and those (i.e. Michael and Paul) offer up offerings on your behalf, and on behalf of your children and brethren, for there is one among them who performeth My commandments. And because of My goodness, and because I rose from the dead [on that day], I will give unto you rest upon the Lord's Day every week, and during the fifty days which follow the [day of the] Resurrection, whereon I rose from the dead.

In the various forms of the *Transitus Mariae* the case is somewhat similar with regard to the respite for the damned. In the Ethiopic version (§ 100) the damned are granted a Sunday respite until three in the afternoon.<sup>42</sup> In the Greek *Apocalypse of the Virgin* (§ 29) during the days of Pentecost the damned can rest and praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup> In one of the Latin versions of the *Transitus* the Sunday respite is for three hours. The same is true of the Irish translation.<sup>44</sup> One definition of the period of respite was from Vespers

<sup>41</sup> Original Coptic text and English translation by E. A. Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt edited with English Translation*, London 1915, pp. clxii–clxxiii (summary), 534–47 (text), 1043–84 (translation); text cited pp. 1069–70 (brackets as in Budge's original). For the Coptic version, see Erbetta, ed., *Gli Apocrifi. 3. Lettere e Apocalissi*, 377, note 56, who thinks that the Coptic may represent one of the texts that have not been affected by the changes proper to the Tarsus recension of the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

<sup>42</sup> See the Italian translation in M. Erbetta, ed., *Gli Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento. Vangeli. 1/2. Infanzia e passione di Cristo. Assunzione di Maria*, Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1981, 442.

<sup>43</sup> See James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 563. See also W. Schneemelcher, 'Later Apocalypses', in: *New Testament Apocrypha. II. Apostolic and Early Church Writings*, E. Hennecke, ed., and R. McL. Wilson, ed. and transl., London: Lutterworth Press, 1965, 753–54. See note to § 100 of the Ethiopic translation in Erbetta, ed. *Gli Apocrifi. Vangeli. 1,2*, 454.

<sup>44</sup> The Latin text (Paris, Bibl. nat. de France, lat. 3550) is cited in Erbetta, ed., *Gli Apocrifi. Vangeli. 1,2*, 454 (in note to § 100 of the Ethiopic translation). For the Irish texts see ed. C. Donohue, *The Testament of Mary. The Gaelic Version of the Visio Mariae together with an Irish Latin Version*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1942, 54–55; English translation by M. Herbert in M. Herbert and M. McNamara, ed., *Irish Biblical Apocrypha*, Edinburgh 1989, p. 130. The 'Irish' Latin text of the *Dormitio* has no visit to Hell, and no reference to a respite for the damned.

on Saturday until the hour of Terce of Monday morning. This latter we have in one Irish translation of the *Visio Pauli*, which we will cite a little further below.

Belief in the Sunday respite for the damned appears to have been common in the Middle Ages and seems to have passed beyond scholarly circles to popular belief. We have what appears to be an interesting example of popular belief in a Sunday respite from Saturday to early Monday in letter 72 of Peter Damian to Pope Nicholas II (1058–61), written December 1059 to July 1061. The relevant part (§§ 19–20) merits citation in full. Under the heading ‘That Souls Condemned to the Pains of Hell Enjoy Respite on Sundays’, the text reads:<sup>45</sup>

I think that we should speak of a subject that I heard about from Archbishop Humbert, a man of great authority. After returning from the region of Apulia, he told me of a mountain range of rugged rock near Puteoli that rose from dark and ill-smelling waters. From these steaming waters, small birds are usually seen rising, and from Saturday evening until Monday morning (*a vespertina sabbati hora usque ad ortum secundae feriae*) they are ordinarily visible to humans. During this time of grace, they are seen freely walking here and there about the mountain as if they had been liberated from their bonds. They stretch their wings, comb their feathers with their extended beaks and, as far as one can tell, peacefully relax during the refreshing time allotted them. These birds are never seen eating, nor is it possible to catch them with any sort of snare. But at dawn on Monday (*diluscente igitur matutina secundae feriae hora*) a great raven that looks like a vulture begins with arched neck to croak at the birds, and at once they hide from him by diving into the water and are not seen again by human eyes until they emerge from the depths of these sulphurous waters on Saturday evening (*adversperscente iam sabbati die*). So it is that some say that these

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<sup>45</sup> In the translation of O. J. Blum, *Peter Damian Letters 61–90*, Washington: The Catholic University Press, 1992 (The Fathers of the Church. Mediaeval Continuation), 122–23, made from the critical edition of the original Latin text by K. Reindel, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 4 vols., in: MGH, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, letter 72 in vol. 2 (1988), 326–66; text cited at 334–35; also in PL 145 [ed. 1867], 423–42, at 427–28. On Humbert’s inclination to cite miraculous accounts, see H. G. Krause, ‘Über den Verfasser der *Vita Leonis IX*’, *Deutsches Archiv*, 32 (1976), 49–85; for the literature of this legendary phenomenon, see K. Reindel, *Die Briefe*, 2 (1988), 335, note 25. For this text, and one of Conrad of Querfurt, see A. Haggerty Krappe, ‘An Italian Legend of Pierre Damian’, *The Romanic Review*, 15 (1924), 94–99, who notes that both texts have to do with certain birds on swampy ground in the south of Italy. He believes there is a pre-Christian, pagan background to the legends, and notes (p. 96) a number of texts on the motif of condemned souls appearing in the shape of birds.

are the souls of men that have been condemned to the fierce pains of Hell, and that on Sunday and during the nights before and after they enjoy refreshing respite in honor of the Lord's resurrection.

A similar legend, again on souls in the form of birds (and again regarding Campania, on the island of Ischia) is found in the German writer Conrad of Querfurt (end of the twelfth century), on a Sunday repose from about three in the afternoon of Saturday to the evening of Sunday:<sup>46</sup>

Videntur circa eundem locum qualibet die sabbathi, circa horam nonam, volucres in quadam valle nigrae et sulphureo fumo deturpatae, quae ibi quiescunt per totum diem dominicum, et in vespere cum maximo dolore et planctu recedunt, numquam nisi in sequenti sabbatho reversurae, et descendunt in lacum ferventem. Quas quidam afflictas animas arbitrantur vel daemones.

(Near the same place on any Saturday about three o'clock in the afternoon, in a certain valley birds can be seen, black and disfigured by a sulphurous smoke. These birds rest there all through Sunday and in the evening with great pain and lament they withdraw, never to be seen again except on the following Saturday, and they go down into a burning lake. Some believe that these are suffering souls or devils.)

In the Irish *Voyage of the Sons of Ua Corra* (ninth century?) §§ 56–57 we have a text in the same tradition as these.<sup>47</sup> During a voyage the Sons of Ua Corra see a soul in the form of a bird. This bird, the soul of a woman once a nun, invited them to another place to listen to birds there, and tells them that the birds they see are the souls that come on Sunday out of Hell. On their way they see three wondrous rivers, out of which the birds would come in waves over them, namely a river of otters, a river of eels and a river of black swans. The bird directing them tells them not to let the shape of the birds they see make them sad. She tells them that the birds they behold are the souls of people enduring punishment for the sins they have committed and that there are devils in the shapes they see behind them pursuing them, and the souls utter heavy and great cries as they flee from their punishment by the devils.

Further, with regard to Irish tradition we may note that in one of the Irish versions of the *Visio Pauli* (RIA 224 P 25 pp. 68–80;

<sup>46</sup> Latin text in Krappe, 'An Italian Legend', 94–95; translation by the present writer.

<sup>47</sup> Ed. W. Stokes, 'The Voyage of the Húi Corra', in *Revue celtique*, 14 (1893), 22–69, at 48–51.

eleventh century),<sup>48</sup> in response to a request of Michael and Paul Christ replies: 'On account of the appeal of Mary, Michael and Paul, and the saints besides, and out of my own goodness I grant them a respite from vespers of Saturday to the third hour of prime of Monday'.<sup>49</sup>

In the Old-Irish text *Cain Domnaig*, on Sunday observance, it is stated that 'not even those in Hell are tortured on that day',<sup>50</sup> that is on Sunday. It is worth recalling that a few paragraphs earlier the same work says that Sunday observance (and thus implicitly the Sunday respite) is to be observed from Vespers on Saturday to Terce on Monday. In the *Vision of Adamnán* (tenth century), the respite is only for three hours on Sunday,<sup>51</sup> although here there may be question not of the damned in Hell but of the souls in Purgatory.<sup>52</sup> In the *Vision of Tundal* (written by the Irishman Mark in 1149) the respite is also for three hours, but this is repeated daily, rather than weekly as in the case of the *Vision of Adamnán*.<sup>53</sup> And here the daily respite is instanced only for one person (King Cormac Mac Carthy, died 1138), rather than for all the damned. In Matthew Arnold's poem 'Saint Brendan' Judas gets only one hour respite each Christmas night.<sup>54</sup>

Judas's petition for an extension may reflect a division of opinion as to the extent of the respite, one view reducing it from early

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<sup>48</sup> Ed. J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Irish Translations of the *Visio sancti Pauli*', *Éigse*, 6 (1948–52), 127–34, at 133. Translation followed that of M. Herbert, in: M. Herbert and M. McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha. Selected Texts in Translation*, Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1989, 135.

<sup>49</sup> The Irish text ends literally: '[. . .] from Vespers of Saturday until Terce Prime of Monday', where *teirt prime* may be due to a conflation of two traditions as to when precisely on Monday the respite ended. Otherwise this Irish text follows closely the Latin of Homily 100 of Pseudo-Bede of Recension IV of the *Visio Pauli* (in PL 94 [ed. 1862], 501–02). The Latin corresponding to the end of the Irish text has: *concedo vobis requiem ab hora nona sabbati usque ad horam primam feriae secundae* (PL 94, 502C; '[. . .] from the ninth hour [None: three in the afternoon] on Saturday until the first hour [Prime] on Monday').

<sup>50</sup> Ed. J. G. O'Keeffe, 'Cáin Domnaig', *Ériu*, 2 (1905), 189–212, at 195 (§ 9); translation given is that of M. Herbert, in: Herbert and McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha*, 51 (§ 6).

<sup>51</sup> *The Vision of Adamnán*, § 30 in the translation of C. S. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante*, London: David Nutt, 1908 (Grimm Library, 18), 43; § 38 in the translation of M. Herbert, in: Herbert and McNamara, ed., *Irish Biblical Apocrypha*, 145–46.

<sup>52</sup> Thus Gougoud, 'La croyance', 65.

<sup>53</sup> *Visio Tnugdali. Lateinisch und altdcutsch*, ed. A. Wagner, Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1882, 44.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew Arnold, 'Saint Brandan', in: 'Narrative Poems', in: *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1898, 165–67.

Monday (as in the Peter Damian text) to Saturday evening (as in the Conrad of Querfurt text). Brendan's intercession had the respite prolonged to the longer period of early Monday morning. What is unique is the extended respite Judas enjoys over the year: from Christmas to Epiphany, from Easter to Pentecost, the feast of Mary's Purification and Assumption, as well as the Sundays outside of these (*Navigatio* ch. 42). This gives a total of  $12 + 50 + 1 + 1 + 42$  Sundays = 106 days out of 365. It would appear that the author had certain traditions for many at least of these respite days. The tradition of the Christmas respite came down as far as Matthew Arnold (but only for three hours); the Sunday rest is well established. The author of the *Navigatio* may have a tradition of a respite from Easter to Pentecost from some eastern source (Ethiopic, Coptic); that for the Assumption was built possibly on a text of the *Transitus Mariae* (which speaks at most of a Sunday rest).

The author of the *Navigatio* seems to have moulded such traditions for his own purpose. I know of no tradition that speaks of any respite for Judas only (with such arch-sinners as Herod, Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas still in Hell's torments; *Navigatio* 25, 33). The author shows great sympathy for Judas, and has made Saint Brendan feel likewise (*Navigatio* 25, 16–59).<sup>55</sup> For the author, possibly what holds for the

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<sup>55</sup> For the legend of the respite of the damned (with reference to Judas) in the Middle Ages see L. Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), 296–97. See also A. Graf, *Miti, leggende e superstizioni del medio evo*, vol. 1, *Mito del paradiso terrestre, il riposo dei dannati, la credenza nella fatalità* (Torino, 1892, reprint New York: M. Franklin, 1971), 241–70 (with reference to the Judas tradition as known from the *Navigatio* and texts dependent on it, 253–54). More specifically on the Judas legend see also P. Lehmann, *Judas Iscariot in der lateinischen Legendenüberlieferung des Mittelalters* (*Studi Medievali*, New Series II, 1929), 308–09, 326ff. (a work I have been unable to consult); L. Kretzenbacher, 'Sankt Brandan, Judas und die Ewigkeit', in *Bilder und Legenden. Erwandertes und erlebtes Bilder-Denken und Bild-Erzählen zwischen Byzanz und dem Abendland* (Aus Forschung und Kunst), (Klagenfurt: Habelt, 1971); P. Dinzelsbacher, *Judastraditionen* (Raabser Märchen-Reihe 2); Vienna: Selbstverlag des Österreichischen Museums für Volkskunde, 1977; P. F. Baum, 'Judas' Sunday Rest', *Modern Language Review*, 18 (1923), 168–82; and most recently K. Paffenroth, *Judas. Images of the Lost Disciple* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); with rich bibliography, pp. 179–96; the Brendan legend pp. 125–26, but mainly through the essay of P. F. Baum; while reference is made to the *Voyage of St Brendan*, the text in question is really the *Vita Secunda*, edited by C. Plummer. See also L. Gougaud, 'La croyance', 65–66; St J. Seymour, *Irish Visions of the Other World* (London, 1930), 87–92. In Seymour's opinion (pp. 88–89) the treatment accorded to Judas Iscariot in the Brendan legend would appear to be unique, and thus confined to Irish literature, although parallels are found elsewhere but with obvious evidence of borrowing from the Irish legend.

arch-sinner Judas will be true *a fortiori* of all the damned. In this episode, it appears that the author consciously stands within the tradition of the *Visio Pauli*, and of that with which Saint Augustine had to contend. It was an ancient problem which continued down through the Middle Ages, namely the difficulty of reconciling eternal punishment with God's infinite mercy and goodness. The person who has given us the *Navigatio* has presented the strongest form of this tradition on the respite for the damned (represented by Judas) known to us, a presentation depending on some traditional sources, but probably as we have it in the *Navigatio* a formulation proper to the author of the work himself.

### 5. *Heaven, Paradise, the Land of Promise in the Visio Pauli and Irish tradition*

Chapters 19–30 of the *Visio Pauli* recount Paul's vision of Paradise. This is followed (chs. 31–44) by the apostle's visit to Hell, which is immediately followed by an account of Paul's second vision of Paradise (ch. 45–51). The Paradise in this second visit is the Paradise of Genesis 2–3, and quite different from that of the first visit. Since the geography of the heavenly realms and the terminology used may help in the study of later Irish visions and journeys (otherworld and others), I here treat of them in some detail.

In the *Visio Pauli* the angel takes Paul into the third Heaven and sets him at the door of a gate through which the righteous enter (ch. 19). When Paul entered within the gate of Paradise, he met **Enoch and Elias**. Paradise here seems to be identified with Heaven, the third Heaven, or located within it. The angel then brought Paul down from the third Heaven and led him into the second Heaven, and again led him to the firmament and from the firmament he led him to the gates of Heaven. The text goes on to say that the beginning of the foundation thereof was upon the river that waters the earth. To his question as to the identity of the river of water, the angel replied that it was the ocean (ch. 21). The text goes on to say (with Paul as speaker):<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> In the translation of J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, 628–29.

And suddenly I went out of heaven, and I understood that it is the light of heaven which lightens all the earth. For the land there is seven times brighter than silver. And I said, 'Lord, what is this place?' And he said to me, 'This is the land of promise [*terra repromissionis*]. Have you never heard what is written: Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth [*terram*]?' (Matt. 5:4). The souls of the just, when they have gone out of the body, are dismissed to this place for a while.' And I said to the angel, 'Then this land will be manifested before the time?' The angel answered and said to me, 'When Christ, whom you preach, shall come to reign, then, by the sentence of God, the first earth will be dissolved (Apocalypse 20:4–6; 21:1) and this land of promise will then be revealed, and it will be like dew or cloud, and then the Lord Jesus Christ, the King Eternal, will be manifested and will come with all his saints to dwell in it, and he will reign over them a thousand years (Apocalypse 20:4–6), and they will eat of the good things which I shall now show you.'

The description of this Land of Promise follows immediately in chapter 22:<sup>57</sup>

And I looked around upon that land, and I saw a river flowing with milk and honey, and there were trees planted by the bank of that river, full of fruit; moreover, each single tree bore twelve fruits in the year, having various and diverse fruits; and I saw the created things which are in that place and all the work of God, and I saw there palms of twenty cubits, but others of ten cubits; and that land was seven times brighter than silver. And there were trees full of fruits from the roots to the highest branches, of ten thousand fruits of palms upon ten thousand fruits. The grape-vines had ten thousand plants. Moreover in the single vines there were ten thousand bunches and in each of these a thousand single grapes; moreover these single trees bore a thousand fruits. And I said to the angel, 'Why does each tree bear a thousand fruits?' The angel answered and said to me, 'Because the Lord God gives an abounding profusion of gifts to the worthy and because they of their own will afflicted themselves when they were placed in the world doing all things on account of his holy name.' And again I said to the angel, 'Sir, are these the only promises which the Most Holy God makes?' And he answered and said to me, 'No! There are seven times greater than these. But I say to you that when the just go out of the body they shall see the promises and the good things which God has prepared for them. Till then, they shall sigh and lament, saying, 'Have we uttered any word from our mouth to grieve our neighbour even on one day?' I asked and said again, 'Are these alone the promises of God?' And the angel answered and said

<sup>57</sup> Elliott, transl., *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 629.



to me, 'These whom you now see are the souls of the married and those who kept the chastity of their nuptials, controlling themselves. But to the virgins and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and those who afflicted themselves for the sake of the name of God, God will give seven times greater than these, which I shall now show you.'

After this Paul is taken to be shown the City of Christ (ch. 22—end 30).

It is worthy of note that in the *Visio Pauli*, chapter 21 the thousand year reign of Christ of Apocalypse 20:4–6 is understood in the literal, not in a spiritual sense, as had been the tradition from Tyconius (c. 400) onwards. (The earliest commentary on the Apocalypse by Victorinus of Pettau [c. 304] had certain millenarian tendencies.) The passage on the Land of Promise may be of significance for Irish ecclesiastical learning in two ways. First of all it may have influenced both terminology (*Terra Repromissionis*; *Tír Tairngiri*) and concepts in the Irish Voyage literature. The clearest example would appear to be the *Navigatio* (ch. 1, 18–19), where Mernóc is said to have found the Delightful Island (*insulam [. . .] nomine deliciosam*)<sup>58</sup> and Saint Barrind says he was encouraged as follows: 'Father, embark in the boat and let us sail westwards to the island which is called the Promised Land of the Saints (*ad insulam quae dicitur terra repromissionis sanctorum*) which God will give to those who come after us at the end of time' (*Navigatio* 1, 33–34).<sup>59</sup> Later he is told that here, in this island, 'it is always day, without blinding darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the light of this island' (*Navigatio* 1, 59–60; see Apocalypse 21:23).<sup>60</sup> Later in the *Navigatio* Barrind encourages his brothers with the words: 'You are living undoubtedly at the gate of Paradise. Near here is an island which is called the Promised Land of the Saints (*terra repromissionis sanctorum*) where night does not fall nor day end' (*Navigatio* 1, 71–77).<sup>61</sup> The influence of the *Visio Pauli* may explain the rather odd quest in time of an island, the Promised Land, which will be given to the saints only at the end of time.

This is not the place to explore this particular point further. This avenue of approach through the *Visio Pauli*, however, may throw

<sup>58</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 4; translation O'Meara, *The Voyage*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 5; translation O'Meara, *The Voyage*, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 7; translation O'Meara, *The Voyage*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 7; translation O'Meara, *The Voyage*, 5.



light on the quest of the Promised Land, *Tír Tairngiri*, in the *Navigatio* and in some of the other Irish voyages.

Another matter on which the *Visio Pauli* may shed some light is the geography of the location of the just in Irish visions, such as the *Vision of Adamnán* and the *Visio Tnugdali*.<sup>62</sup>

## 6. *Enoch and Elias in Paradise in Irish voyage tradition*

An obvious difficulty with presumed dependence of the *Navigatio* on the *Visio Pauli* is that, unlike the latter, the *Navigatio* makes no mention of Enoch and Elias when speaking of *Terra Repromissionis* (or Paradise). It may be that the original on which the *Navigatio* drew did have reference to Enoch and Elias. Mention is made of them as dwelling in an island in the *Voyage of Snegdus and Mac Riagla* (§§ 22–23)<sup>63</sup> and in *The Adventures of Columba's Clerics* (§§ 51–52).<sup>64</sup> In the former it is in the second last island visited by Snegdus and Mac Riagla. The king of the island tells them that he and the others there shall dwell there till judgement come: 'For good are we without sin, without wickedness, without [stain] of our crime. Good is the island wherein we are, for in it are Elijah and Enoch and noble is the dwelling wherein is Elijah'. The clerics say that they would like to see Enoch, but are told that he is in a secret place until they shall all go to the battle, on the Day of Judgment. Similarly in the closely related text of the *Adventures of Columba's clerics*.

We may recall that in 1960 Mario Esposito drew attention to an apocryphal 'Book of Enoch and Elias' as a possible source of the *Navigatio*.<sup>65</sup> The work in question is the *Historia de Enoch et Elia* which the twelfth-century chronicler Godfrey of Viterbo (born c. 1120) said was to be found in the church (Benedictine Abbey) of Saint Matthew in Brittany, the date of which book cannot be ascertained, although

<sup>62</sup> For the problems with regard to the *Vision of Adamnán* see M. McNamara, 'Some Aspects of Early Irish Medieval Eschatology', in: *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages. Learning and Literature*, P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter, ed., Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996, 42–75, 71–73.

<sup>63</sup> Whitley Stokes, ed., 'The Voyage of Snegdus and Mac Riagla', *Revue celtique*, 9 (1888), 14–25 (at 22–23).

<sup>64</sup> Whitley Stokes, ed., 'The Adventure of St Columba's Clerics', *Revue celtique*, 26 (1905), 130–70 (at 164–67).

<sup>65</sup> M. Esposito, 'An Apocryphal "Book of Enoch and Elias" as a Possible Source of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', *Celtica*, 5 (1960), 192–206.

it may be as old as the sixth or seventh centuries. Esposito comments, that as for the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* read by Godfrey of Viterbo in the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Matthew in Brittany, its existence cannot be doubted, for Godfrey was a perfectly trustworthy writer, who took only minor liberties with the originals when paraphrasing them in verse. If, as seems probable, it was as old as the sixth or seventh centuries, it might well have been the original source of the Irish voyage-legends (Brendan, Mael Dúin, Snegdus, etc.). There was regular intercourse between Ireland and Brittany during the early period, and some wandering Irish monks may well have made a copy of this book belonging to the monks of Saint Matthew and taken it over to Ireland. The diffusion of this production in Ireland, Esposito continues, would explain the deep interest shown by certain Irish writers in the exceptional fate of Enoch and Elias, removed mysteriously from circulation and confined in a deserted island-Paradise, where they await death at the hands of Antichrist. These individuals are not mentioned in the Latin *Navigatio*, but they have been introduced into certain Italian and German versions.<sup>66</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In this paper I have examined sections of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* against what seems to be their natural setting, in an attempt to see if this approach could shed some light on the circles within which the work might have originated. Two other subsections of the paper have to do with the broader question of Irish voyage literature.

The biblical Psalter text used throughout the *Navigatio* is the Vulgate, the *Gallicanum* commonly in use throughout Gaul (hence the name), the greater part of Europe and in Ireland from the early Middle Ages onwards. The texts cited are in general brief and show no regional or recensional particularity. For this reason they provide no evidence for, or against Irish, or continental origin for the *Navigatio*.

The special interest of the author of the work in the Divine Office is evident. It does appear, however, that *Navigatio* contains insufficient evidence to permit us to attach the form of Divine Office he knew, the psalms used at particular canonical hours, to any of the known forms of the Divine Office, Irish or other. It is clear from the evidence

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<sup>66</sup> Esposito, 'An Apocryphal "Book"', 203–04.

the text provides, none the less, that the form of the Divine office presented in the *Navigatio* was *not* that of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Thus, if the *Navigatio* was composed on the Continent rather than in Ireland, it can scarcely have originated in a Benedictine community, or in one influenced by Benedictine tradition. It may be that the Divine Office put before us in the work, with the indication of psalms for particular hours, was an idealized one, the author's own composition, put together for reasons important for him but unknown to us. It could be that he was conversant with a variety of forms of the Divine Office and moulded this tradition for his own ends.

With regard to the feasts of *Theophania* (Epiphany) and the Assumption of the Mother of God, the use of the term *theophania* (thus far unknown in Irish Latinity) would favour a continental origin—unless, as noted above, the term is not original. Since some commemoration of Mary's Assumption on 14 or 15 August seems to have been known in Early Ireland, mention of this feast in the *Navigatio* does not argue necessarily for composition on the Continent.

The Judas episode, with the respite for this damned soul on Sundays and stated feasts and festal periods, is most interesting, and possibly potentially very informative with regard to the nature and background of the masterpiece that is the *Navigatio*. This form of the Judas tradition is unique, peculiar to the *Navigatio* and texts dependent on it. It does not form part of the continental or Irish Judas tradition. It seems clear that the author had access to a variety of forms of the respite for the damned tradition. The most common of these was that on the Sunday respite, varying in extent from the longer None on Saturday to Terce on Monday to the shorter Saturday evening to Sunday evening. The author has particular interest in a tradition extending it to early Monday, which was being curtailed to Saturday evening. He appeals to Saint Brendan to have it extended to Monday morning, which petition is accepted by the Lord in response to Brendan's prayer. The other tradition of an extended respite from Easter to Pentecost is known from eastern (Coptic) recensions of the *Visio Pauli* (and possibly in the Ethiopic version of the *Transitus Mariae*) but as yet it would appear unattested in Latin tradition—which, to my knowledge, has thus far not been fully researched. The items of information with regard to this extended respite for the damned (typified by Judas) may have circulated in the author's community, or may have been drawn from books known to him. Some of the instances may be his own creation. In any case, it would

appear that the author of the *Navigatio* has taken a definite stance with regard to the eternal punishment of the damned, in line with the position known to Saint Augustine and advanced in the *Visio Pauli* in its various recensions. The Sunday respite for the damned could have been known to him from the *Visio Pauli*, as transmitted on the Continent and in Ireland, and in certain forms of the Irish tradition (for instance the *Cáin Domnaig*). However, with regard to a tradition of a more extensive respite for the damned, there seems to be no evidence of this in Irish tradition. A contrary position in Irish and other traditions seems to have been to omit all mention of such a respite, or limit it to three hours on Sundays, as in the Latin text and Irish translation of the *Transitus Mariae* and in the *Vision of Adamnán*.

It will be for future research to further explore the possible theological, liturgical and apocryphal affiliations of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, as well as its connection with Irish tradition.

## APPENDIX

## NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI: BIBLICAL PSALTER TEXT

(texts as in ed. Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, with chapter, line, page of Selmer edition)

Abbreviations used: Vg = Vulgate; VL = Vetus Latina (Old Latin). As required, reference is made to the unpublished critical edition of the *Navigatio* prepared by Professor Giovanni Orlandi.

Ps. 144:17 (ch. **1**, 87–8, p. 8) Iustus Dominus in omnibus uis suis et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis

135:25–26 (ch. **6**, 50–51, p. 14) Qui dat escam omni carni, confitemini Deo celi

64:1 (ch. **11**, 51–52, p. 25) Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Syon, et tibi redetur uotum in Iersusalem

50:17 (ch. **11**, 60–61; p. 25) Domine, labia mea aperies

148:2 (ch. **11**, 62–63, p. 25) Laudate Dominum, omnes angelis eius, laudate eum omnes uirtutes eius (Bible text: L. D. de caelis, l. eum in excelsis, Laudate eum o.a.e. laudate eum omnes uirtutes eius)

Ps. 89:17 (ch. **11**, 66–67; p. 26) Et sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos

Ps. 46:7–8 (ch. **11**, 69–70, p. 26) Psallite Deo nostro, psallite, psallite regi nostro, psallite sapienter (Vg and VL, without any significant variant, read: Psallite [. . .] regi nostro psallite (**v. 8**) **quoniam rex omnis terrae Deus** psallite sapienter

Ps. 46:2 (ch. **11**, 70–71, p. 26) Illumina Domine uultum tuum super nos et miserere nostri

Ps. 132:1 (ch. **11**, 71–72, p. 26) Ecce quam bonum et quam iocundum habitare fratres in unum

Ps. 64:6 (ch. **11**, 110–11, p. 28) Exaudi nos Deus salutaris noster, spes omnium finium terre et in mari longe

Ps. 69:2 (cf. Ps. 37:23) (ch. **12**, 103–04) Deus. in adiutorium meum intende;  
= Vg

Ps. 105:6 (ch. 12, 105, p. 35) [Iniuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus]. = Vg; no brackets in ed. cr. G. Orlandi

Ps. 4:9:10 (ch. **11**, 106–08, p. 35) In pace in idipsum, dormiam et requiescam, quoniam tu Domine singulariter in spe constituisti me Vg = VL except VL obdormiam for dormiam (VL *q* moz dormiam)

Ps. 67:36 (ch. **15**, 14–15, p. 41) Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis Deus Israel ipse dabit uirtutem at fortitudinem plebi sue. Benedictus Deus (plebi RC plebis FM cum Ro; Ro = VL except plebis for plebi; plebi Ro age moz med Ga

Ps. 117:27 (ch. **15**, 48–49, p. 43) Dominus Deus illuxit nobis. Constituite diem solemnem in condensis usque ad cornu altaris (Vg Deus Dominus et inluxit nobis [. . .] ad cornua [. . .]). No variant in Vg or VL ‘Dominus Deus’; no v. l. om. ‘et (inluxit)’, Vg cornua RL cum LXX; ad cornu FI rell codd et edd cum Ro. This text = Vg, not VL which has ‘in confrequentationibus’ for ‘in condensis’. Revised, unpublished, critical edition of G. Orlandi reads as Vg: Deus Dominus, et inluxit nobis. Constituite diem solemnem in condensis usque ad cornu altaris

Ps. 83:8 (**17**, 18–19, p. 50) Ibunt sancti de uirtute in uirtutem et uidebunt Deum deorum in Sion (Vg ibunt de uirtute in uirtutem uidebitur Deus deorum in Sion; ibunt + sancti V only V = Pal lat 65 (S. Maria de Capra, s. xii–xiii); in uirtute F; VL ambulabunt (de uir [. . .])). No variant uidebunt in Vg or VL

Ps. 66:2 (ch. **17**, 26, p. 50) Deus misereatur nostri = Vg; VL d.m. nobis [nostri VL e, Aug]

Ps. 69:2 (ch. **17**, 27, p. 50) Deus in adiutorium meum = Vg; VL Domine Deus in adiut. (domine om. aez moz); ed.cr. G. Orlandi + intende (to meum)

Ps. 115:1 (ch. **17**, 27, p. 50) Credidi = Vg and VL; ed. cr. G. Orlandi + propter

Ps. 129:1 (ch. **17**, 28, p. 50) De profundis; = Vg and VL

Ps. 132:1 (ch. **17**, 28–29, 50–51) Ecce quam bonum = Vg and VL

Ps. 147:12 (ch. **17**, 29, p. 51) Laudaque Ierusalem Dominum; Vg and VL (Lauda Hier. Dom.); ed. cr. G. Orlandi has: Lauda Hierusalem

Ps. 64:2 (ch. **17**, 30, p. 51) Te decet hymnus Deus in Syon = Vg and VL

Ps. 103:1 (ch. **17**, 30–31; p. 51) Benedic anima mea Domino Domine Deus meus = Vg; VL Dominum (Domino d moz) (Domine Deus meus). This is the second psalm for vespers; the third is given immediately afterwards; Selmer (p. 51) errs in making two texts of this by citation marks: ‘Benedic anima mea Domino’; ‘Domine Deus meus.’

Ps. 112:1 (ch. **17**, 31–32, p. 51) Laudate pueri Dominum = Vg and VL

Pss 119–33 (ch. **17**, 32, p. 51) quindecim gradus

Ps. 148:1 (ch. **17**, 37, p. 51) Laudate Dominum de celis = Vg and VL

Ps. 149:1 (ch. **17**, 38, p. 51) Cantate Domino = Vg and VL

Ps. 150:1 (ch. **17**, 38–39, p. 51) Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius = Vg and VL

Ps. 50:1 [and Ps. 55:1 Vg, not VL which has *mis. mihi*] (ch. **17**, 42, p. 51) Miserere mei Deus = Vg and VL (for 50:1 only)

Ps. 62:2 (ch. **17**, 42–43, p. 51) Deus Deus meus ad te de luce uigilo = Vg and VL; ed. cr. G. Orlandi Deus, Deus meus

Ps. 89:1 (ch. **17**, 43, p. 51) Domine refugium = Vg and VL

Ps. 46:2 (ch. **17**, 44, p. 51) Omnes gentes = Vg and VL

Ps. 53:3 (ch. **17**, 44, p. 51) Deus in nomine tuo = Vg and VL

Ps. 114:1 (ch. **17**, 45, p. 52) Dilexi quoniam sub Alleluia = Vg and VL (both of which have Alleluia Dilexi quoniam)

Ps. 64:6 (ch. **27**, 16–17, p. 77) Exaudi nos Deus salutaris noster spes omnium finium terrae et in mari longe = Vg (no variants) and VL

Ps. 83:5 (ch. **28**, 21–22, p. 79) Beati qui habitant in domo tua in seculum seculi laudabunt te = Vg, except Vg in *saecula saeculorum* (no significant variant; but = VL which has in *saeculum saeculi*, and VL adds *Domine* after in domo tua) (ed. cr.; CIQΦ<sup>v</sup> have in domo; ed. cr. G. Orlandi reads: Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine; in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te





THE HISPANIC VERSION OF THE  
*NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI*:  
TRADITION OR FORM OF RECEPTION OF A TEXT?

Aires A. Nascimento

1

When I first began to look for the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* in Portuguese manuscript collections, all that was available to me initially was a single, indirect witness from the manuscripts of the library of the Cistercian monastery of Alcobaça (since the first half of the nineteenth century these manuscripts have been in the National Library of Lisbon). I had frequently used this collection in my codicological and textual research, but it was largely a work by Carl Selmer that drew my attention to a non-canonical version of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* to be found within the Alcobaça collection. Selmer himself, two years before the publication of his critical edition of the base text of the *Navigatio*,<sup>1</sup> had produced an edition of the Alcobaça text with a brief introduction.<sup>2</sup> Here he stressed that this version was merely a Latin translation of an Old French original, but he had not been able to determine its model.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, this translation (whatever this term means in terms of faithfulness to Benedeit's text) raises as many problems as it opens up new horizons. It bears witness to the dissemination of a text

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<sup>1</sup> C. Selmer, *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Ind.) 1959.

<sup>2</sup> C. Selmer, 'The Lisbon *Vita Sancti Brendani Abbatis*—A Hitherto Unknown *Navigatio*: Text and Translation from Old French into Latin', *Traditio*, 13 (1957), 313–44. It is MS Lisbon, BN, Alc. 380.

<sup>3</sup> As far as I am concerned, I came to the conclusion that it is a Latin translation of the Anglo-Norman text of Benedeit, different from, and independent of the Latin original, which the author, in his vernacular version, says (if 'en lettre mis' is to be retained) he himself composed very near the beginning; cf. Aires A. Nascimento, 'Navigatio S. Brendani, de Benedeit: originais e traduções, em situação de leitura e recepção', *Actas de VII Congreso de la AHLM—Castellón de la Plana, Setiembre 1997*, ed. Santiago Fortuño Llorens and Tomàs Martínez Romero, Castellón de la Plana 1999, vol. 3, 63–78.

through repeated literary use; it provides us with a glimpse of the interest shown by readers who were drawn to developments of a text which were more in tune with new sensibilities, as well as of the ability these same people possessed to distinguish the original version from versions derived from it.<sup>4</sup> This Alcobaça version, however, was an isolated case, and I was not able to explain fully its presence in a Portuguese collection. While trying to conjure up a picture of the conditions in which this text had been circulated, and to work out how its author had had access to an otherwise unknown translation, I ventured to advance a hypothesis: this Latin translation could have reached the library of the Cistercian monastery of Alcobaça from Cîteaux, where monks attending the General Chapter could have encountered it.<sup>5</sup> Anyway, this gesture on the part of our monks led me to suppose that there had been genuine interest in a legend which would have been known in the area, but for which the Cistercians of Alcobaça had perhaps lacked any available evidence.

It was only some time later, after a good deal of work on another collection of manuscripts, the Santa Cruz of Coimbra collection, now in the Municipal Library of Oporto,<sup>6</sup> that I was fortunate enough to discover two new manuscripts of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, the analysis of which provided some surprises. I must admit frankly that, as far as I am concerned, my original interest in the *Navigatio* went beyond its strictly philological aspects. I was more concerned with matters of culture and history, so that I could satisfy the needs of the historians of Portuguese explorations, who had kept on asking for an accessible translation to help them with their research. For the chroniclers of the earliest Portuguese maritime explorations had given the impression that the *Navigatio* was a well-known text. The

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<sup>4</sup> As a working hypothesis, one can accept that the Benedeit text, though created for the environment of the royal court, corresponds to interests underlying certain developments, such as the sufferings of those condemned to hell; it is perhaps in this sense that one must understand the note at the head of the first folio of MS Barcelona, ACA, Ripoll 41 (XIII in), which also contains *Navigatio sancti Brendani*: 'Iste liber est de penis infernalibus'.

<sup>5</sup> In 1205, in Cîteaux, the Irish monks were given authorisation to celebrate the feast of St Brendan, but with restrictions, to avoid disturbances which might follow the consumption of drink; a certain tension seems to have existed: cf. M. Esposito, 'An apocryphal "Book of Enoch and Elias" as a Possible Source of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Celtica*, 5 (1960), 192–206.

<sup>6</sup> Even before undertaking the work that would lead to the catalogue of this collection of manuscripts: *Catálogo dos Códices da Livraria de Mão do Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra na Biblioteca Pública Municipal do Porto*, coord. Aires A. Nascimento & José Francisco Meirinhos, Porto 1997.

earliest of them, Gomes Eanes de Azurara, in his *Chronicle of Guinea*, refers to it with a certain amount of suspicion (others criticize Ptolemy). But this attitude, although negative, presupposes the existence of a *Navigatio* text and its inclusion within a corpus of reading material which must to some extent have influenced the ways of thinking which inspired maritime explorations.

The manuscripts I discovered confirmed this idea, but studying them led me to other working hypotheses. In the first place, these manuscripts related to a much earlier period than the Alcobaça version: our witnesses can be dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but they give us a glimpse of a still older tradition. Moreover, and above all, I was surprised to find a version of the *Navigatio* which was characterised by numerous differences when compared to the standard text as edited by Selmer. The variants could not be explained away by normal textual transmission. They did not affect the structure of the text directly, but, although remaining at the level of sentence structure, they seemed to me to reflect a simpler textual state. At this point, I encountered a problem in my analysis: what would be the meaning of such simplicity? Was it in fact merely simplification, or rather the maintenance of an earlier state which elsewhere had been transformed by amplification? In the absence of direct information, the question remained open, because in fact it goes beyond the mechanics of transmission to become a process of rewriting.

The textual differences were so great that I had no hesitation in considering that this version of the *Navigatio* justified a separate edition.<sup>7</sup> In fact, faced with a textual situation differing from the standard tradition, and relying on the edition of Selmer (who had been unaware of my manuscripts and consequently did not take account of their variants), I thought it necessary to deal with this new material directly, using my witnesses, without taking into account the remainder of the tradition or undertaking more exhaustive work. This was all the more important as I knew that such work had been under way for a long time and was in the hands of competent specialists.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The hypothesis of also taking into consideration the Coimbra version in a context of increased interest in the Brendan legend caused me not to neglect it, but to include it so that it appeared next to that of the Latin translation of Benedeit, documented in Alcobaça. My edition was published under the title *Navegação de S. Brandão nas fontes portuguesas medievais*, ed. by Aires A. Nascimento, Lisbon 1998; new edition, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> G. Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, I—*Introduzione*, Milano 1968. During the colloquium of which this volume represents the Proceedings participants had the

I was aware that the textual tradition of the *Navigatio* is quantitatively vast, even though the chronological distribution of the manuscripts is relatively restricted (basically from the tenth to the fifteenth century with some additions up to the seventeenth century).<sup>9</sup> It must also be taken for granted that not all of these manuscripts have the same value for an edition. Selmer restricted the scope of his work to less than two dozen manuscripts, which he organised into families. He worked on a base manuscript, even though he acknowledged errors and gaps in it, and succeeded in providing a preliminary view of an extensive and very difficult field.

My more recent editorial work uses as many manuscripts as possible, without aiming to be exhaustive. This is the case even though, in such a large field, information technology can provide valuable assistance to those preparing a critical edition and usefully detect affiliations between manuscripts. The establishment of groups and families of manuscripts is within the scope of my work. My aims are wider than before, because I am not interested merely in piecing together the individual manifestations of the tradition, even if this methodology does lead us to a starting point for the text that is close to the original state of the tradition.

A study of the tradition will be even more useful if it helps us to recognise communities of readers: in fact, whatever its recognised and accepted identity, the text is above all something to be read (and readers behave in a more unpredictable fashion than copyists). So the problem lies in unearthing the tendencies of these reading acts as much as in the mechanisms of copying, and in the perception within these mechanisms of the transitions between different lines of transmission. The recovery, or recognition, of regional groups of manuscripts is in this respect part of a method of working which must go beyond physical boundaries, in order to establish cultural boundaries which are not immediately evident within the topogra-

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good fortune to receive a still provisional critical edition of the text prepared by G. Orlandi. This is not the version we have before us, for the sound reason that my study was done prior to this friendly gesture on the part of the editor and was based on C. Selmer's version. I would like, once and for all, to pay homage to someone who has distinguished himself for a long time in the study of the text in question. I wish to thank him for having admitted me to a dialogue in which my knowledge is only very limited in such a vast universe.

<sup>9</sup> The formulation of G. Orlandi, 'Considerazioni sulla tradizione manoscritta della *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*' insists on the distribution 'su un arco cronologico così ampio da coprire mezzo millennio, tra la fine del X sec. e il XV con appendici nel XVII'.

phy of the medieval world. We are also very much aware, in our day, of different types of reception<sup>10</sup> which do not simply emerge from the copy, and this is something we must also integrate into our work. Independently of exhaustive cataloguing, and however many manuscripts are recorded, the differences within families will be able—at least in theory—to open the way to the history of the texts, as well as to changes in culture and its history, based on readings recovered from the variants in our manuscripts as well as from variations or different versions of texts. To grasp the stages of transition, whether they involve transmission or contamination, will certainly be a difficult task, but it is an attractive one for those aiming to recreate the relationships between the human communities underlying our texts.

In another sense, after having studied the genetics of the text (in respect of its authorial source), philology will also need to examine the changes undergone by the text in the minds of its readers (individually and collectively) and define the anamorphosis undergone by these texts.<sup>11</sup> There are no fundamental rules, but at least as a working hypothesis one must accept that these changes have identifying features which are sufficiently clear-cut to demand an explanation, and also accept that we cannot evade them or ignore them. If my introduction is rather long, it is because I would like to reach conclusions regarding the Hispanic *Navigatio sancti Brendani* tradition.

## 2

Based on Selmer's description of the manuscripts and on the results of my own work, it seemed possible at a certain point to identify a small group of manuscripts in which the *incipit* was different from

<sup>10</sup> Of reading and not of transformation. The translations must also contribute to this aim; one must not forget the work that has just been done in this field: cf. *The Voyage of S. Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English translation*, ed. W. R. J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess, Exeter 2002; rev. paperback version 2005.

<sup>11</sup> My theoretical position was presented at the Fourth Colloquium of the Portuguese Section of the Hispanic Association of Medieval Literature (Lisbon, 23–25 October, 2002): 'Anamorfoses de um texto: identidade e diferença nas versões (hispânica e vulgata) da *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', in: *Da decifração em textos medievais—Actas do IV Colóquio da Secção Portuguesa da Associação Hispânica de Literatura Medieval*, coord. Ana Paiva Morais, Teresa Araújo, Rosário Santana Paixão, Lisboa, Ed. Colibri, 2004 (2003), 93–110. We use the term 'anamorphosis', which is mainly used in geometry, but also in the arts and aesthetics, to designate the transformations undergone by the text under the effect of reading by a textual community.

that of the others and in which the textual typology of the contents seemed to point towards an Hispanic origin.<sup>12</sup> I use the term ‘group’, and not at this stage ‘family’, because I would like to reserve this latter term for genealogical relationships or proven dependence.

2.1. My first impressions, after a more detailed analysis, had to be altered somewhat, because the textual detail did not correspond in any way to my initial supposition.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the group was reduced to four manuscripts:<sup>14</sup>

- 1) *P*: Porto, Santa Cruz of Coimbra, 34 (end of the 12th century), ff. 11r–117r;
- 2) *Q*: Porto, Santa Cruz of Coimbra, 69 (13th century), ff. 268v–273v (*mutilus sub fine*);
- 3) *M*: Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, San Millán 10 (13th century), ff. 1r–6v (*mutilus*);
- 4) *C*: Paris BNF, lat. 2444—olim Colbert 3610 (13th century), ff. 51r–67r.

Independently of the need to check to see whether this group is complete,<sup>15</sup> without wishing either to oversimplify my analysis or to reach premature conclusions, it seems to me that it is already of interest to take note of some data and to establish some lines of enquiry.

<sup>12</sup> Paris, BNF, 2444 (olim Colbert 3610), (s. XII); Paris, BNF, nouv. acq. lat. 1606 (proc. Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) (s. XI). Madrid, Bib. Real Acad. Hist. San Millán, 10 (s. XII); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc., 315 (s. XV).

<sup>13</sup> This is the case, at least, with two Paris manuscripts: Paris, BNF, nouv. acq. lat. 1606 (orig. Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire—11th century) and Paris, BNF, 2444 (olim Colbert 3610—12th century). For the latter note the content constituted by Hispanic texts: f. 1, Alvarus Cordobensis, (*pro* Defensor Locogiacensis), *Liber Scintillarum*; f. 51, *Vita S. Brendani* (*incipit* Sanctus Brendanus magne abstinencie et uirtutibus clarus . . .); f. 67, St. Leander Hispalensis, *De virginitate perpetua S. tae Mariae*. The route taken in Italy by this manuscript causes no problems because one knows of other manuscripts of Hispanic origin which passed through the kingdom of Sicily.

<sup>14</sup> The acronyms I shall be giving remain close to the designation that appeared in my edition, without, for all that, obliterating or causing equivocation in Selmer’s system; that is the reason for the graphic apostrophe. We also use V to indicate the vulgate version and H when referring to the Hispanic version as evidenced in the manuscripts of Iberian origin.

<sup>15</sup> It is admitted by G. Orlandi, who adds to it the Oxford manuscripts: Rawl. B 485 (XIV in.); Rawl. B 505 (XIV ex.—copy a primo). We also have indications that lead us to Paris, BNF, f. lat. 755, ff. 249v–252r and Rome, B. Valliceliana 7, ff. 142–144v, in which the Judas episode seems to be identical to the one found in my manuscripts. My first approaches were published in ‘Tradição hispânica da *Navigatio sancti Brendani*: apontamentos para a história de um texto’, *Crítica del Texto*, II/2 (1999), 709–34.

2.2. Let us remember that our witnesses are situated within geographical boundaries, namely the Iberian Peninsula: the description of the content of each manuscript leaves no room for doubt as to their origin, for a good number of texts belong to the Hispanic tradition.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the Hispanic origin of these manuscripts is supported by some other clues:

- a) In *P* one term had initially been written in two different ways: *luter* . . . *later* (*luter* 26, 71); the revisor had hesitated over the question of uniformity and over the first occurrence he wrote *uel later*. He was well aware that it was the same word, but he made a mistake. Now this little error enables us to retrace our steps and admit that the model of the older Santa Cruz manuscript was written in Visigothic script. For anyone who understands the difficulty of reading the *u* in this script, this tiny feature cannot fail to attract attention.
- b) Another feature of this tradition can be detected in the brachygraphic system: *aūm* for *autem* in fact takes us back to Visigothic script.
- c) This same Hispanic tradition can perhaps also be detected in the transcription of figures within the numerical system: they are, in fact, faithful to the tradition, though representing it differently, because, whereas *M*<sup>o</sup> (the San Millán manuscript) maintains the upper-case tick ('aspe') *X*<sup>o</sup>, giving its equivalent in figures, *XL*, or in full, *quadraginta*, manuscript *P*<sup>o</sup> (the oldest Coimbra manuscript) drops the upper-case tick like a comma and replaces it with a small *a* (*X*<sup>a</sup>), and *Q*<sup>o</sup> (the most recent Coimbra manuscript) sticks to the feature that goes over the *X* and betrays the old form.<sup>17</sup>

2.3. The Parisinus manuscript, moreover, although it presents clear affinities with the other Hispanic manuscripts, differs from them by

<sup>16</sup> If this needs to be proved, it seems to me to be enough to indicate: for Oporto, Santa Cruz 34, the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* by Pedro Alfonso; for Oporto, Santa Cruz 69, two texts by Valerio de Bierzo; for the Parisinus, it is also clear that the content is of Hispanic origin: f. 1, Alvarus Cordobensis (*pro* Defensor Locogiacensis), *Liber Scintillarum*; f. 51, *Vita S. Brendani*; f. 67, S. Leander Hispalensis, *De institutione virginum et contemptu mundi*; f. 79v, *Vita S. Alexii*; f. 84, S. Hildefonsus Toletanus, *De virginitate perpetua Sae Virginis*. The arrival in Paris from the library of the kings of Sicily is not unique and may be confirmed by other manuscripts. The text, nevertheless, presents other problems, as will be mentioned later.

<sup>17</sup> One must pay great attention to this: I had not noticed it at first. The problem of the passage of one representation to another has occupied palaeographers. Cf. Jean Mallon, 'Pour une nouvelle critique des chiffres dans les inscriptions latines gravées sur pierre', *Emerita*, 16 (1948), 14–45 (voir Jean Mallon, *De l'écriture*, Paris 1982, 190–207, notably p. 194, with the warning that the gist is printed in J. Mallon, *Paléographie romaine*, § 187–217). Cf. also Richard J. Lemay, 'The Hispanic Origin of our Present Numeral Forms', *Viator*, 8 (1977), 435–62. The most recent Coimbra manuscript is also integrated in a schooling process which subjects it to a stricter orthographic code than that of the other manuscript.

being a version related to the wider, or vulgate<sup>18</sup> tradition; it must therefore be regarded as contaminated. It is definitely a border manuscript, but it also contains its own errors; the most obvious example, and one of the most significant, can be seen in the first chapter, with the change of orientation in the voyage undertaken by Barrind and Brendan. Whereas the entire tradition has them sail west in search of the island where the Promised Land of the Saints was to be found, the Parisinus manuscript has them sail towards the east—*nauigamus contra orientalem plagam ad insulam que dicitur Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum*.<sup>19</sup>

2.4. As far as the present state of the text of the three Hispanic manuscripts is concerned, two of them have suffered the accidental loss of the longer or shorter final section; nevertheless, at least one of the Coimbra witnesses gives us the full text and, from what we know, enables us to regard it as representing the lost section of the other two. As for the text's conclusion, the variants of which, based on Selmer, have been the means of distinguishing two groups, the Hispanic version leaves no room for doubt: it is definitely closer to the short version—the concluding formula is brief, as is the doxology.<sup>20</sup>

2.5. There is, however, a problem: the relationship between these manuscripts. In spite of their Hispanic origin, as far as one can tell, at least for the three cases of textual similarity, the manuscripts come from institutions which are a long way from each other: Coimbra and San Millán de Cogolla, in the Burgos region of Spain. If links

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<sup>18</sup> In this account we use the term 'vulgate' to refer to the most widespread Latin version of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, in opposition to the version of the same text that is essentially found in the Iberian Peninsula.

<sup>19</sup> The mistake continues in the river which, in the tradition, flows from east to west, crossing the whole width of the island; the Parisinus says: *quinto decimo die inuenimus fluium ingentem (cor. uergentem) ab occidentali parte*. It is curious to note that Columbus thinks that he will get to the Orient, to Japan (Cipango), when navigating constantly towards the west (we use the latest edition by Luis Arranz Márquez, *Cristóbal Colón*, Madrid 2002).

<sup>20</sup> *Sicque dormiuit in senectute bona et appositus est ad patres suos. Per omnia benedictus deus qui uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.* Cf. Parisinus lat. 2444 sic desinit: *Quem cum fratres uidissent et glorificauerent deum pro recepto [patrono]; cum quibus loquebatur mirabilia dei qui uiderat queque audierat. Sicque dormiuit in senectute bona et appositus est ad patres suos. Per omnia benedictus qui uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.*



between these two cultural poles cannot be properly documented, they cannot be excluded.<sup>21</sup> Let us keep in mind, at least, that they are situated in the north and central region of the Iberian Peninsula, in a significant cultural boundary region in the period prior to the twelfth century. If it cannot be shown that one of the manuscripts is directly dependent on the other, the affinities between the two can be demonstrated. Some aspects seem to me to be significant when it comes to identifying a tradition:

- a) There are common errors which, in the present state of our knowledge, are not found in the broader tradition:<sup>22</sup> *Etide/Ende* (3, 6); *iacentis/iacentes* (22, 30); *scaltes/scaltas* (17, 63); *multitudinis/in pascuis pre multitudine* (§ 21, 7); *officio/officinis* (23, 3),<sup>23</sup> *Isconius/Iasconius*. It seems to me to be possible to explain these errors: in the first case graphic confusion; in the second case incorrect agreement with the adjacent noun; in the third case a change of ending (in a uncommon term); in the fourth case the elimination of a term (considered unnecessary); in the fifth case alteration of word endings; in the sixth case semantic evolution and adaptation of content; lastly, a variant on an exotic name. The number of common errors is therefore limited and virtually minimal, but they are certainly not due to chance.<sup>24</sup>
- b) There are also individual readings which oppose M' to P' Q'. Here are some examples (leaving aside omissions peculiar to M'):

<sup>21</sup> Avelino de Jesus da Costa, 'Coimbra—Centro de atracção e de irradiação de códices e de documentos, dentro da Península, nos sécs. XI e XII', *Actas das II Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de História Medieval*, Porto 1990, vol. 4, in a long paragraph drew attention to some manuscripts taken from Zaragoza to Coimbra by Bishop Paternus in 1080 and mentioned in the Necrology of the Cathedral of Coimbra. What interests us is not the small number of books but rather the possibility of circulation of the manuscripts. For a broader picture, cf. M. C. Díaz y Díaz, *Códices visigóticos en la Monarquía Leonesa*, León 1983. May I also refer to my study: 'A Igreja na história da cultura: percursos do livro em Portugal na Idade Média', *Igreja e Missão*, 184 (2000), 139–201.

<sup>22</sup> The first form corresponds to the Hispanic tradition, the other to the vulgate.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. other readings: *iacencium* BL *iacencia* PFSkEHO *iacentes* *Selmer*; *officiis* FH.

<sup>24</sup> May I make a brief remark on the hypothesis of a mistake that is common to all the tradition of *Navigatio sancti Brendani*: G. Orlandi, 'Considerazioni', indicated that in ch. 11, 54, one must correct *octo menses*. I differ in this: it is the time between Whitsun and Christmas; if we take into account that the way of counting time in the old Latin system includes the moment of departure and the moment of arrival, if Whitsun is celebrated in May and Christmas in December, in this system of counting one must reckon precisely *octo menses*.

| Cap. | <i>M'</i>                                                                                                                   | <i>P'Q'</i> (in parenthesis <i>V'</i> )                                                                                                                 |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | et aut deliciis aliquibus uidelicet cibi                                                                                    | non indigens alicuis cibi <sup>25</sup>                                                                                                                 |
| 3    | Definieret                                                                                                                  | definiunt (definiuit <i>V'</i> )                                                                                                                        |
| 5    | augm̃                                                                                                                       | Auñ (= autem)                                                                                                                                           |
| 6    | a parte septentrione<br>Remigii<br>et uocantem fratrem                                                                      | a parte setentrionali<br>nauigii<br>euocantem fratrem <sup>26</sup>                                                                                     |
| 7    | Argentum<br>Sathanas<br>Domine                                                                                              | argenteum (= <i>V'</i> )<br>diabolus (= <i>V'</i> )<br>frater (pater <i>V'</i> )                                                                        |
| 8    | Magnum<br>dum ueniatis ad consolacionem                                                                                     | longum (= <i>V'</i> )<br>inueniatis consolacionem<br>(= <i>V'</i> )                                                                                     |
| 10   | Pernoctans<br>cepit illam insulam sicut moueri unda<br><br>insula quam uidistis ubi fuistis non<br>est insula <sup>28</sup> | pernoctantes <sup>27</sup><br>cepit se illa insula mouere<br>sicut unda<br>insula quam uidistis non<br>est insula (insula est ubi<br>fuimus <i>V'</i> ) |
| 24   | talem finem                                                                                                                 | talem meritalem finem<br>(meriti talem finem <i>V'</i> )                                                                                                |
| 25   | atque Assumptionis                                                                                                          | usque ad Assumptionem<br>(in Assumptione <i>V'</i> )                                                                                                    |

Explanations are similarly possible because some of the errors can be understood as discrepancies in the scribal process or as due to external influences (contamination between *talem finem* and *talem meritum*). The error can be attributed to *P' Q'* or rather to *M'*. The meaning of the sentence is sometimes sufficient to allow for a decision; another way of settling this is to have recourse to a comparison with the vulgate version (*V'*). This exercise is far from easy, because the vari-

<sup>25</sup> The passage is not easy, but it seems possible to recognize that *M'* had difficulty in accepting the Hispanic version and reacted as a result, but was not able to clarify its text.

<sup>26</sup> The text can only mean the gesture of the demon which wants to attract the monk by showing him the *frenum* hanging on the wall of the palace hall; the version of *V'* goes: *et iocantem coram predicto fratre*. Not having understood the action, *M'* trivialises the verb (*euocantem* > *et uocantem*) of *P'Q'*, the relevance of which, anyway, is debatable.

<sup>27</sup> *M'* considers that Brendan is outside the ship, but he is inside; it is the monks who, having landed, had spent the night praying.

<sup>28</sup> The contamination of versions, with the transformation of the person of the verb, seems obvious to me.

ants increase in number. This sample, however, permits us to be sure of several features:

- *M'* is further from *V'* than *P'* *Q'*; there are difficult passages (1, 6c, 10a), but the *M'* version turns out to be unsatisfactory;
- *M'* makes mistakes either because of an incorrect interpretation of abbreviations (3; 5) or because the text is wrongly interpreted (6c; 10a);
- *M'* does not respect syntax within groups of words (6a, 10a), nor word order within the sentence;
- *M'* changes words that seem to derive from the original (6c; 7b, c; 8a, b);
- *M'* contaminates versions (10c).

In such conditions one is entitled to consider *M'* to be worse than *P'* *Q'* when it comes to guaranteeing the reliability of a tradition (the reading of ch. 25 may be attributed to a correction unique to this manuscript).

### 3

We must admit that there are variants which are typical of the Hispanic tradition.

- 1) There are variants common to all manuscripts; to cite one such case, it is sufficient to point out that in 25, 48, the vulgate<sup>29</sup> contains *Thetim* . . . *Thetis*, whereas our manuscripts have *tartarum* . . . *tartari* PQM'. I shall return to this variant.
- 2) There are also variants which are peculiar to some manuscripts. Above all, one can detect clear innovation in the case of the Coimbra manuscripts: the formation of doublets in which the second word is an alternative to the first. The oldest manuscript has eight such cases,<sup>30</sup> while the most recent records only two in

<sup>29</sup> The forms are misinterpreted by some of the manuscripts: 1° sol *F*; 2° abyssi *S*.

<sup>30</sup> The alternatives peculiar to *P'* are: 6 persuasum uel suadentem/suadentem *V*; 7 ledas uel leseris/ledas *V*; 11 nuntius uel signaculum/nuntius *V*; 11 cantare uel clamare/cantare *V*; 22 per quadriduum uel quadriduanum/per quadriduum *V*; feruescit uel ministratur/ministratur *V*. The alternatives common to *P'**Q'* are: 25 furculas uel forcillas/forcillas *V*; 25 globus uel rogos/rogus *V*.

common: *globus uel rogus* (24, 21); *furculas uel forcillas* (25, 4). Behind these equivalent terms, it seems, are marginal glosses introduced into the text through the alternative *uel*; in such circumstances one can conclude that they are variants jotted down in the margin of a manuscript already in the scriptorium and different from the one used as a model for the copy. In the present case the coincidences with the vulgate version are so great (there are only a few variations in word order in the groups) that they suggest that the person responsible for the copy had access to a text of the vulgate version. On this subject I cannot, however, avoid asking: if the person responsible took into account variants from another version, why did he decide to keep faith with the local witness, or, in another sense, why did he choose only a few words to form these doublets? The answer seems clear to me: there was surely an authoritative textual tradition.

- 3) The situation of *Q'* in relation to *P'* allows us to say that the most recent manuscript (*Q'*) does not depend directly on the oldest. Yet we recognize a case in which the *P'* variant is taken up by *Q'*: *et uidistis* (25, 26);<sup>31</sup> in this case, the older manuscript had its own form (*audiistis*), against the general tradition (maintained in the San Millán manuscript); so *Q'* adversely affects two traditions, which suggests knowledge not only of *P'*, but also of the vulgate. The same conjecture can be made in relation to *M'*, from San Millán: in fact, at the end of ch. 22, there is a note: *de columpne mirabilibus pauca descripsit*. If one takes into account the fact that this chapter's version is very much reduced in the Hispanic tradition, and more developed in the vulgate, we may suspect that the note does indeed refer to this version; moreover, if the note in question was a marginal note, it is so well incorporated that a sensible conclusion would be that this is an example of an earlier annotation taken up by the copyist.
- 4) Finally, under these circumstances, it seems possible to deduce that the Hispanic tradition is wider and older than the one for which the representatives of this tradition provide direct evidence. As for dating, in the present state of our knowledge it is impossible for us to go further back than our manuscripts, and we are therefore hampered in relation to the Central-European tradition.

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<sup>31</sup> The vulgate version and *M'* have *quem uidistis*; the manuscripts give *quem audistis* (*P'* *Q'*) *et uidistis* (*Q'*); it is obvious there is contamination in *Q'*.

Nevertheless, if dating eludes us, one must not shirk the task of pinpointing this same tradition in an attempt to define it.

In the first place, the Hispanic tradition is not entirely remote from the Central-European tradition, known as the vulgate. The Parisinus manuscript must be taken into consideration even if it too is regarded as a border manuscript. The doublets also mean that there is a close association with this external tradition, even though they are found almost entirely in just one of our manuscripts (as it happens, the oldest).

Above all, we have to look beyond the level of forms and observe that the version found in the Hispanic manuscripts, in contrast to that provided by the rest of the tradition, is characterised by the brevity of its textual content.

Another problem then occurs, because it points us towards the genesis of a version, or at least towards the meaning of the transformations in a text. Let us bear in mind that the treatises on medieval rhetoric (Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*, for example, but Bruneto Latini's *Livre du Trésor* does not ignore it), pay special attention to amplification and abbreviation; eight means or techniques for the first topic and seven for the second are recommended under these headings.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, our text does not have a preface which might enlighten us concerning the intentions of an adapter; moreover, none of our versions identifies the situation in which it has been created.

One thing should be borne in mind: there are two elements I would like to interpret as notes jotted down for inclusion in the Hispanic tradition and which seem to be a reaction by those who received the text, at the copy phase, which reveals a state of reduction. In ch. 12 one can read in the three manuscripts: *Hic multa dereliquit mirabilia*; moreover, as we have already noted, in ch. 22 of the San Millán manuscript, a reaction has been left within the text: *De columpne mirabilius pauca perscripsit*. We must therefore conclude that the short version is older than our manuscripts.

Another distinguishing feature is that we cannot point to any entirely new episode in the two versions. So individual development has to be excluded. But is the short version necessarily based on the long one of which we have knowledge? Furthermore, does the latter,

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. vs. 203–694; 695–740.

rather than the former, reflect the original state of the text? A comparative textual analysis is necessary.

3.1. The final chapter is perhaps a good starting-point. Selmer remarked that in the vulgate it occurs in two forms: one short and one long. The same editor has suggested that the structural equilibrium of the text assumes the long version and provides a hint that what was abbreviated was probably due to clumsy intervention; anything excluded would have been motivated by the insertion of the *Navigatio* into the *Vita Sancti Brendani*.<sup>33</sup>

Orlandi,<sup>34</sup> for his part, has queried this view and denied that the long version of the final chapter is more authentic than the short version. His arguments are supposedly based on differences of language and style (he counts nine cases of *hapax* in relation to the vocabulary in the remainder of the text) and also on the changes in meanings for certain terms (particularly *aspectus*, the connotation of which seems to relate to a later period than the Carolingian). On the other hand, Orlandi tries to explain the long version by means of hagiographical appropriation of the text, an appropriation seen in other states of the tradition (the inclusion of St Machutus/Malo among Brendan's companions). This hagiographical perspective would have been easy to create and would be recognizable in the three episodes which are part of the long version of the chapter: (a) Brendan's return and the festive welcome given by the monks who had stayed behind in the monastery; (b) the narration of the *mirabilia* witnessed during the voyage; (c) Brendan's death and burial.

This hypothesis would enable us to situate the Hispanic version apart from the history of this development of the final chapter, because its text has nothing in common with the vulgate. Moreover, even the Parisinus lat. 2444 manuscript is too distant from it.<sup>35</sup> It would nevertheless be too risky to draw conclusions from this, if we

<sup>33</sup> Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 97–98.

<sup>34</sup> Orlandi, 'Considerazioni', loc. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Our witness *P* reads: *Sicque dormiuit in senectute bona et appositus est ad patres suos. Per omnia benedictus deus qui uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.* On its part the C' (Parisinus lat. 2444) ends in the following manner: *Quem cum fratres uidissent et glorificauerunt deum pro recepto [Brendano]; cum quibus loquebatur mirabilia dei qui uiderat queque audierat. Sicque dormiuit in senectute bona et appositus est ad patres suos. Per omnia benedictus qui uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.* There is obviously a section in common.

accept the position of Selmer who, even if he claims that the inclusion and exclusion of these [concluding] lines can determine the division of the manuscripts into two main groups, those with a long ending and those with a short ending. 'This division', states Selmer, 'must have been present in the very early times, because each main group is represented by a MS of the tenth century'.<sup>36</sup> Even so, let us bear this problem in mind, because we are not simply faced with a matter of chance.

3.2. The first chapter creates similar problems. The Hispanic version leaves no room for Brendan's genealogy; it also has three paragraphs less than the vulgate version. On the other hand, it raises the number of monks from 3.000 to 130.000, and, above all, contains variants which go beyond any similarity of redaction.

Orlandi, who knows the tradition better than anyone else and can discuss it authoritatively, took account of our version and we must follow his analysis.

Let us leave aside minor aspects: for the variant *Mumenensium/Numenensium* it has to be said that it probably represents nothing other than dissimilation in the first two syllables (a phenomenon which, moreover, can be seen in some copies of the vulgate); as for the variant figures for the number of monks, they are so arbitrary that we must regard them as whimsical and say that, if they deserve to be considered, it is because of the semantic or symbolic value attached to the higher (too high) figure.<sup>37</sup>

Let us deal with other problems. At the time of the discovery of the *Insula deliciarum*, the Hispanic version tells us of Mernóc's tiredness: *ascendens in quendam montem lassus inuenit insulam satis deliciosam*: it was probably towards the end of the day, it was still light (*erat itaque dies* reads the text, in a somewhat child-like fashion) and the character is rewarded for his effort. The vulgate version has *inuenit insulam iuxta Montem Lapidis nomine Insula Deliciosa* (1, 18).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Selmer, ed., *Navigatio*, 98.

<sup>37</sup> Though I do not consider the problem to have been fully examined, I nevertheless refer to F. Rebelo Gonçalves, 'Apontamentos para o estudo da numeração indeterminada em latim', *Obra Completa*, I, Lisboa 1995, 107–23. Selmer notes that the figure of 3,000 monks can be read in the life of Comgallus; for S. Fintane or S. Munnu, it is reduced to 1,500; in our case, MS Paris, lat. 1606, has *centum milium fere monachorum pater*.

Orlandi, though admitting the difficulty he has in finding evidence for, or recreating a shift from, the tradition, maintains that *lassus* corresponds to a corruption of an old, even original, reading of *Lapidis*, maintained by some groups of vulgate manuscripts. He also claims that essentially this reading would be no more than a latinisation of Slieve League, a mountain in Donegal, a well-attested form in the Hibernian region.

For my part, I must confess that it is the text of the vulgate version which I find difficult. In fact, the mountain should form part of the island; and yet, if we consider carefully the possible meanings of the preposition *iuxta* in the *Navigatio*, it refers to closeness or proximity and not to other circumstances; moreover, if we admit that the traditional reading may be interpreted as situating the island at the foot of the mountain, the difficulty remains because the island of Paradise does not have a mountain in our text (even less, one which is a distinguishing feature).

Furthermore, it seems to me that it is unnecessary to refer to the *Vita Brendani* in defence of equivalent terms, because it says: *ascendit in montem longe a mare dispositum; directoque in equora prospectu, insulam uidit amoenissimam*,<sup>38</sup> there is a distance between the mountain Mernóc climbs and the island he sees in the distance.

Let us stress also some diegetic divergences. According to *V* (the vulgate), Mernóc intends to distance himself in order to live alone and he comes across an island; it appears at first that he had no precise idea of where to find it, but, all of a sudden, the mountain and the island are named and known. The wording in the Hispanic tradition *H* seems more acceptable: Mernóc's intention is not explicit, it is the place he finds towards the end of a day's solitary travelling; the island is a place of delights, a *locus amoenus*, but it has no name.<sup>39</sup> Just as for *Saltus Virtutum Brendani* it will be the mystical experience which will consecrate the places and maintain their name within the

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<sup>38</sup> In this case (and independently of influences) the mountain must surely correspond to the one which, according to our manuscripts, Mernóc climbed and which the *Codex Salmanticensis* designates under the name Aitche. This is a reference from Orlandi, 'Considerazioni', who uses the Plummer edition, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Oxford 1910.

<sup>39</sup> There are some parallels with the experience of another character in the Hispanic tradition: Trezenzonius, who discovers in the west a marvellous island, where he will have an extraordinary experience (cf. *Navegação de S. Brandão nas fontes portuguesas medievais*, ed. Nascimento, 211–40).



tradition. Have we then reached a theoretical point which is also, from the perspective of literary creativity, a starting point? This is undoubtedly a pertinent question.

3.3. Still in the first chapter, a few lines further down, concerning the Promised Land, and independently of some divergent details (perhaps as a result of a desire for clarification in the San Millán de la Cogolla manuscript),<sup>40</sup> all four Hispanic manuscripts agree on its characterisation: *ab initio mundi permanet non indigens alicuius cibi aut potus siue uestimenti; unus annus est semper in hac insula.*<sup>41</sup>

The vulgate presents a version in which there is no description/characterisation of the island, but the person who welcomes the visitors, after having pointed out that nothing changes on the island, suddenly turns to Mernóc and asks him if he lacks anything: *Sicut illam [insulam] uides modo, ita ab initio mundi permanet. Indiges aliquid cibi aut potus siue uestimenti? Unum annum enim es in hac insula et non gustasti de cibo aut de potu.*

The differences in discursive treatment between the two traditions are obvious at the level of the dialogue between the characters:

- a) H', unlike V', does not attach importance to a question 'unde esset'—the answer was so obvious that it was not worth thinking about (in fact, the character belongs to the place Mernóc had just gone into, so it is the latter who is the stranger);
- b) regarding the characterisation of the island, it is only partly similar in the two traditions (there are no changes), because, while H' stresses that there is nothing he needs, V' transposes the problem on to the level of the character's own experiences.
- c) an even more radical impression comes from V': the period of fifteen days (noted twice) that Barrind and Mernóc had spent exploring the island and going over it again becomes a whole year, which is incoherent; on the contrary, H', which is somewhat crude from

<sup>40</sup> This is the complete passage according to the San Millán manuscript: *Cur queris nomen meum et quare non interrogas de hac insula que ab initio mundi permanet et aut de deliciis aliquibus uidelicet cibi aut potus seu uestimenti? Unus annus est semper in hac insula, dies sine fine cecitate tenebrarum, quia dominus noster Ihesus ipse lux ipsius est.* The Parisinus manuscript changes the subject of the sentence after the interrogation of the shiny figure which surprises the visitors: *Cur me interrogatis unde sum aut quo nomine uocor? Quare me [non] interrogatis de ista insula? Sicut illam uidetis modo ita ab initio mundi, non indigens alicuius cibi aut potus aut uestimento.*

<sup>41</sup> One must mention the fact that the other tradition has a variant which G. Orlandi considers significant: *ab initio mundi permansit. Indigesne aliquid cibi aut potus siue uestimenti?* The change of the person of the verb cannot be ignored.

the point of view of the sentence structure, sticks firmly to the characterisation of the island: the body has no needs, time does not go by, light does not change—in short, we are on a supernatural level in which Christ is the light (and also life—it must be understood). From our point of view, the version of V' is more elaborate than that of H', but it goes beyond what could be expected.

3.4. We can conclude that the Hispanic tradition is structurally closer to the original wording and that the Central-European tradition *has omitted more*. Let us move on to another chapter. In 2, 2–5 the text is far from transparent and an explanation is required.

The version represented in V' begins: *Igitur sanctus Brendanus, de omni congregacione sua electis bis septem fratribus, conclusit se in uno oratorio cum illis et locutus est ad illos*. Let us accept that normal grammatical rules have been respected: *electis fratribus* is an ablative absolute. Consequently, it is not the abbot who makes the choice; the decision is made by the assembly, and as a result one must understand *bis septem* as a multiplier. Even so, the tradition is not completely homogeneous: *binis fratribus septem* is an attested reading and suggests another situation—in which the monks are in groups of two seven times.

It is precisely this situation which is easier to understand on the basis of H': *igitur sanctus Brendanus, conuocatis binis fratribus, septeno numero*. The question is what is to be done as a result of the news brought by Mernóc. The differences are clear. Let us then recreate the situation and understand how the text has shifted. Let us go about it methodically, according to two diegetic episodes.

- 1) The introduction. For V' there is a community which has already been formed; its assembly carries out the election of fourteen monks; afterwards Brendan withdraws to an oratory with the monks, to talk to them, asking for their help and advice (just as in the feudal system). For H' it is Brendan who calls the monks to him, two by two, seven times, and each time he reveals his intentions to them. The answer is unanimous, but obtained in a different fashion: whereas in V' the unanimity is the result of a single, collective act, in H' it is the result of the sum of seven individual acts, which turns it into a providential sign. The manner and the time of the consultation and the response follow different patterns. The resulting image of the abbot and of the monastic congregation is also different: a cluster of groups in H', a single community in V'. An analysis of the sequence of V' seems

to show that the reading of H' is correct: *cor meum et omnes cogitationes meae coglutinatae sunt in unam voluntatem*.

- 2) The intervention of the protagonist: Brendan speaks to the monks. In fact in H' it is simply a matter of announcing an intention. In V' there is a very elaborate speech, which falls somewhere between the expression of a desire and a decision. The statement comprises: (a) the identification of the addressees—characterised as *combellatores* (fighters!);<sup>42</sup> (b) the expression of a request: *consilium atque adiutorium* (feudal system); (c) the identification of an objective: to know the divine plan; (d) the expression of a possible solution: consultation with the monks.

3.5. Therefore, as a frame of reference, we have different realities:

- a) Regarding the figure of the monastic abbot: according to V' the abbot is *primus supra pares* in a community—he must ask for *consilium et adiutorium*, and must respect the answer according to the known formula *sanior pars* (although unanimity strengthens the decision); according to H': the abbot is the superior of groups of monks and he receives answers from them which are all the more binding as they are identical.
- b) Regarding the system of representation: V' replaces what is essentially a symbolic system with an administrative one—number seven must relate to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, to whom are attributed inspiration and advice; the groups of two are in full agreement with the indication of the Gospel and earlier apostolic practice. The way V' handles this seems to me to be definitely influenced by an administrative attitude or an act of authority; the consequence of this is the sentence: *Illi, agnita uoluntate sancti patris, quasi uno ore dicunt omnes . . .*

In fact, the subject of the consultation is anticipated by V' as a decision. Here, and by way of conclusion for this short paragraph, V' seems to be a later version of an earlier redaction. The latter is simpler and more modest, less imbued with monastic experience, but full of mystical sense and affection for the abbot.

3.6. The administrative organisation also prevails in V', in ch. 3. The redactor is keen to make it clear that, before Brendan and the monks leave, everything is handed over to the provost of the monastery.

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<sup>42</sup> If a reminiscence can be identified, it would be the Plautus address, but the actor would say *commillitones*, a word which comes in the vulgate, ch. 26.

This situation is unknown to H'. Now, from the diegetic point of view, the addition in V' creates a certain amount of confusion: the handing over of authority to the provost comes after the formula *salutatis fratribus*, that is to say, after the good-byes.

A similar preoccupation is to be found in ch. 4, which depicts the immediate preparations for the journey as being in a place near the sea, in a mountain spur that stretches out over the ocean. H', in a single word—*modo*, suggests that the spot receives the name *Sedes Brendani* precisely because Brendan has stayed there to build the ship;<sup>43</sup> V', more discursive, already distances itself—*qui dicitur*. For the building of the ship, the wording in H' is limited to the statement that Brendan and his monks *fecerunt nauiculam leuissimam et miserunt in ea omnia utensilia que ad usum uite humane*; V' gives very precise technical details. The difference surely indicates a fundamental attitude, in which organisation takes priority over merely noting what happens. Would it also be valid to gauge the independence of the versions? It seems hard to imagine that someone who knows a text filled with details should not remember them, at least partly, when producing a new version.

3.7. Let us try to do a cross-check. Let us move to ch. 12, in which the arrival at the island of Ailbe is described. This chapter is all the more significant as it presents a model of monastic life and attracts Brendan, who wishes to stay there. On the other hand, at this point in the text, the Hispanic tradition retains a note which states: *hic multa dereliquit mirabilia*. It seems interesting to compare these two versions, in parallel also with Benedeit's version (B in the table).

It is quite obvious that, on the diegetic level, it is important to have a monastic model; it is quite clear that Brendan (the model monk) wants to stay, seeming to forget about the journey.

The account in H' is brief: it maintains only the details necessary to situate the action (far away, on an unexpected island) and to recreate the message (the organisation of a model of monastic life); it refers to a previous statement in the words of the abbot—in fact, Brendan disappears as an active force and his presence is indicated

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<sup>43</sup> Despite Orlandi's opposite interpretation, I maintain that *modo* relates to a moment close to the events, with the intention of explaining the change of toponym; on the contrary, the narrative *dicitur* stems from knowledge, with no other time than the diegetic one.

merely at the moment when his stay in the monastery (during the Christmas season) is announced and at the time of departure; the only place to create the message is the refectory (the monks do not in fact go into the church); the description of the locations is omitted; only the information regarding the history and way of life of the monks is retained (silence, natural food, divine assistance); the extraordinary episodes (the two springs, the lighting of the lamps) are mentioned, but not experienced; the prediction (of the loss of the two monks who are not destined to remain in the group) only occurs at the end of the stay (it is at the moment of saying farewell that the abbot informs Brendan). In this way one can understand the reaction of the reader/copyist, who left the note *hic multa derelinquit mirabilia*.

In V', the narration is much more circumstantial, in terms of both chronology and distribution of space, which seeks to give a full picture of monastic life and the meaning of its acts, as well as of its status, protected by Heaven; the various moments are indicated (on the order of the service and the sequence of the acts of the monastic life), all the spaces are also mentioned (the entrance to the monastery; the refectory; church; cells); the characters assert their own status (Brendan commands the action, interprets the situations, speaks to the others and requests information, spends the night in spiritual dialogue; the abbot of the monastery is the perfect example of the practice of the monastic rule: in the welcome and interpretation of communal life; the monks move in perfect order).

Benedeit's narrative shows few contrasts: it develops the welcome in order to show that the relics and items in the treasury are displayed, and it has the monks going from the refectory to the church, but it is outside the church (there is no more specific indication) and already in the third stage of welcome in the monastery that information is given on the history of the monastic community and its life, and the signs of divine assistance (interpreted in terms of the provision of supplies and not of the extraordinary manifestations, not even the arrow that lights the lamps—the flame lights itself); it is also in this discourse that a plan for the stay and the departure is made. It is only at the end of the episode that Brendan speaks again.

We see that H' limits itself to the essential; the technique it uses for its statements is perfect: in a single sentence it gathers together a whole series of elements: V' expands the action in time and space (with predictions and fulfilments) bringing into the action characters omitted in the other versions.

| Unit | Content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | H' | V' | B  |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 1    | 1 Wandering over the vast ocean for three months                                                                                                                                                                                                             | +  | +  | +  |
|      | 2 Refreshment is taken every two or three days                                                                                                                                                                                                               | —  | +  | +  |
| 2    | 1 An island is sighted and the monks try to land                                                                                                                                                                                                             | +  | +  | +  |
|      | 2 The monks sail around the island for 40 days, but the wind prevents them from landing                                                                                                                                                                      | —  | +  | +  |
|      | 3 Discovery of two springs/one spring and two streams                                                                                                                                                                                                        | +  | +  | /+ |
|      | 4 Brendan forbids them from drinking without the permission of the inhabitants                                                                                                                                                                               | —  | +  | +  |
| 3    | 1 An old man, who comes to meet the monks, leads them to the monastery in silence                                                                                                                                                                            | +  | +  | +  |
|      | 2 Brendan tries to obtain information about the monastery but the man keeps silent                                                                                                                                                                           | —  | +  | +  |
| 4    | 1 Welcome ritual before the gates of the monastery                                                                                                                                                                                                           | +  | +  | +  |
|      | 2 Solemn greeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | +  | +  | —  |
|      | 3 The relics and treasures are shown                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | —  | —  | +  |
|      | 4 Procession of the monks to embrace the visitors                                                                                                                                                                                                            | —  | —  | +  |
|      | 5 Entering the monastery and the washing of feet                                                                                                                                                                                                             | +  | +  | —  |
| 5    | In the refectory:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | +  | +  | +  |
|      | 1 Bread, roots, drink; moment of silence, reading, bread and edible roots, delicious water                                                                                                                                                                   | +  | +  | /+ |
|      | 2 The abbot's speech:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | +  | +  | *  |
|      | * Explanation of the two springs and of the origin of the bread                                                                                                                                                                                              | —  | +  | —  |
|      | a                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |
|      | 2 Information on the composition of the monastic community and its origins: 24 monks; food mysteriously sent; an increase in food for the visitors; the two springs have a different function                                                                | +  | +  | —  |
|      | b                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |
|      | 2 Information on the way of life: structured liturgical office; total silence; the absence of fire (to provide light, an arrow comes to light the lamps).                                                                                                    | +  | +  | —  |
|      | c                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |    |    |
| 6    | In the church                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | —  | +  |    |
|      | 1 The monks who had served at table remain in the refectory                                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |    | +  |
|      | 2 The monks who had given them a place in the refectory leave the church and go back to the refectory                                                                                                                                                        | —  | +  |    |
|      | 3 Service in the church: the singing of Vespers                                                                                                                                                                                                              | —  | +  | +  |
|      | 4 After Vespers, Brendan admires the church (the building, the lights, the vases, the distribution of space) and remembers the monastic habits (at the service; silence)                                                                                     | —  | +  | —  |
|      | 5 The abbot invites Brendan to visit the refectory again                                                                                                                                                                                                     | —  | +  | —  |
| 7*   | Outside the church:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | —  | —  | +  |
|      | 1 The abbot tells Brendan about the history of the community and the place where they are: there are 24 of them; the founder died 80 years ago; he had been a powerful man and had set out for this place to lead a solitary life; the others had joined him | *  | *  | +  |

Table (cont.)

| Unit | Content                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | H' | V' | B |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|---|
|      | 2 God helps the monks: health, bread, every other working day (a bigger portion on feast days), water (two streams—one for drinking, the other for washing, lamps which are lit constantly. . .                                          | *  | *  | + |
|      | 3 An indication that Brendan must not leave before the octave of Epiphany                                                                                                                                                                | —  | *  | + |
| 7    | Return to the refectory                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | —  | +  |   |
| 8    | Complines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | —  | +  |   |
| 9    | Withdrawal to individual cells for rest                                                                                                                                                                                                  | —  | +  |   |
| 10   | 1 While waiting for the <i>mirabile</i> of the lamps being lit by celestial fire, the abbot talks to Brendan: there are 24 of them; they have lived on the island for 80 years; they observe silence; they pray; they enjoy good health. | —  | +  | * |
|      | 2 Brendan tries to find out if he can stay in the monastery                                                                                                                                                                              | —  | +  |   |
|      | 3 The abbot replies that he must continue his voyage and that two monks will be lost                                                                                                                                                     | *  | +  |   |
|      | 4 The <i>mirabile</i> of the lamps takes place: an arrow goes into the church, lights all the lamps and goes out. The abbot explains that it is similar to the light of Moses's burning bush.                                            | —  |    |   |
| 11   | 1 In the morning, Brendan wants to leave but is advised to stay for the celebration of the Christmas festival                                                                                                                            | —  | +  | * |
|      | 2 Brendan stays for the celebration of the Christmas festival                                                                                                                                                                            | +  | +  |   |
| 12*  | As he is on the point of leaving, Brendan is warned by the abbot that he will lose two of his monks                                                                                                                                      | +  | *  | — |

N.B.—\* = an omitted or displaced element

From a textual point of view there are differences which naturally derive from the change of discourse. There are others which reflect a change of situation. Particularly noticeable is one alteration in which the correspondence of the situations requires careful thought. Let us consider the scene again: the old monk guides the visitors to the monastery. According to H', he does not say a word on the way there and suggests that they must remain silent; according to V', it is Brendan who insists on the requests, but who finally decides to warn his monks (who have not said anything) against speaking in order not to 'pollute the brothers with their chatter'. Immediately, to mark the passage to the next scene, the expression used by the two traditions is similar in form: the Hispanic tradition has *His introductis*, which is altogether in conformity with the introduction of the visitors to the monks who come out to welcome them; the vulgate, on the contrary, presents *His interdictis uerbis* or the variants *his uerbis*

*expletis/his autem dictis*. The similarity in form of *introductis/interdictis* is an argument in favour of Selmer's choice when he needs to provide a legitimate reading faced with the variants *dictis* HE *inter se dictis* B *autem dictis* k. *His interdictis uerbis* is nevertheless a peculiar expression: the best interpretation would be 'with these words of prohibition', but the ablative absolute has nothing to do with the following scene, because it is the monks who emerge from the monastery in the form of a procession; one can but wonder if *interdictis* is not simply a correction of *his introductis* stemming from a clumsy interpretation. In this hypothesis the original expression would be the one found in the Hispanic version. Also, more in keeping with the situation is the order of the text which reserves for the moment of farewell the prediction of the loss of the two supernumerary monks. Here too we are in the Hispanic tradition.

## 4

It is risky to propose a general conclusion based on an interpretative grid or on a few variants. It is particularly so when one claims to be defining the identity of each version and their relationships. There are, however, some traces which seem to be dominant.

4.1. The Hispanic version has a short configuration; the Central-European version has a broader formulation (we avoid the words abbreviation and amplification for clear-cut reasons, i.e. so as not to prejudge the issue).

4.2. On the other hand, the brevity of the Hispanic tradition and the breadth of the vulgate—even though based on an arbitrary distribution—particularly distinguishes some chapters and some episodes or situations. They are the moments when the action is suspended (the voyage); in the vulgate these moments mean an increase in thought (whether or not subject to doubt), in prayer and in decision making, as well as in the description of an object, the appreciation of an attitude, or in an analysis of a situation and a commentary. The omissions in the Hispanic version relate mainly to the speeches attributed to Brendan in the vulgate. In the first chapter the comparison shows the presence/absence of three whole periods, marked by words that clearly stress the moment: *cum consideremus* [. . .] *dubium*



*nobis erat; sed nescimus; glorificantes deum* [. . .]. In ch. 2, it is the moment of taking a decision which fulfils these conditions; in ch. 3, it is accessory circumstances which are being questioned; in ch. 4, it is the description of the details of the building of the ship which provides the contrast; in ch. 5, it is a commentary on the situation which shows the difference.

## 5

Overall, it is perhaps not going too far to try to characterise the two versions of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*.

1. The Central-European vulgate concentrates on one protagonist. Brendan commands, gives instructions, interprets and is responsible for all decisions; his interventions in direct speech provide the main proof of his role. The Hispanic version, on the contrary, emphasises the monks as a group, and they become the subject of the action; it is above all narrative, avoiding the characters' speeches and not exploiting the exotic side of things, even though it maintains the sense of the marvellous.
2. The expression of circumstantial elements seems to show a discursive difference in the two versions: V' prefers to use a sentence as a linking device; H' opts for the participle, notably in the ablative absolute construction. As a result, V' expands, whereas H' groups elements concisely.
3. There are also intensifications in V': for example, constructions involving the durative aspect of the verb (*cepit interrogare*), the frequent use of prepositions (*pro merito, pro misericordia, pro indulgentia*), emphatic expressions (*infelix ille*), explanatory or repeated expressions (*quando effluebant ab illo; quomodo inuocas nomen domini super illum*); there are also in V' lexical choices involving qualification rather than description: *penitencie locus* in H' has its equivalent in V' in the form of the expression *penalis iste locus*, which belongs to a less common mode. Intensification by means of the superlative is also more widely represented in V': *infelicissima anima* corresponds to *misera anima* in H', *avis grandissima* in V' is simply *avis grandis* in H'; in the same way *uestibus candidissimis* in V' is *uestibus albis* in H' or *odorem suauissimum* in V' is *odorem* in H'. As far as superlatives are concerned, we note 25 occurrences: 14 are found in

- both manuscripts, but 11 belong exclusively to V'. A similar picture is found in Brendan's affectionate treatment of his monks: out of 14 occurrences of *filioli* 12 belong to V' and only 2 to H'.
4. If it appears that V' exploits what is exotic and strange, there are also specific choices: an extreme case is the opposition between *tartarum* in H' and *Thetis* in V'. The scene occurs at the end of the day, and it seems necessary for the place to be characterised (this is ch. 25, when Judas must leave the ocean to be taken back to Hell): H' prefers to use the word *tartarum*, a quite pertinent term in this case and, besides, well known from the liturgy;<sup>44</sup> V' uses the term *Thetis* which, although a learned word, seems less adequate in the context, because we are dealing with a place characterised by darkness and suffering. The inadequacy of *Thetis* is felt by one of the witnesses of the vulgate, S, since it gives us the interpretative variant *abyssi*, a word that turns up again a few lines later in both versions; I cannot find a reason for the choice of *Thetis*, which represents the intrusion of a mythological element which is essentially nothing but a misplaced sign of erudition to designate simply the sea (when a more distinctive word for a testing situation was to be expected).

## 6

It seems possible, therefore, to say that the vulgate version is more elaborate than the Hispanic one. Is it possible to deduce from this fact a direction the tradition is taking, if there is an underlying common tradition? This is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. But, despite our limitations, we cannot avoid the contrast between the two versions. Finally, let us look at a last representative case of the way Brendan is characterised.

In ch. 23 he is *venerabilis pater* in V' and *uir dei* in H' or *uenerabilis senex* in H': V' tends to indicate his status as *pater*. His gestures are

<sup>44</sup> For its connotations, cf. Isid. *Et.* 14, 9, 8: 'Tartarus uel quia omnia illic turbata sunt, ἀπὸ τοῦ ταρταρίζειν aut, quod est uerius, ἀπὸ τῆς παραχῆς, id est a tremore frigoris, quod est algere et rigere, scilicet quia lucem solemque caret, quia neque illic uapores sunt, qui ex solis luce gignuntur, neque flatus, qui eiusdem motibus incitatur, sed perpetuus stupor'. One should note that *Thetis* does not appear in the *Etymologies* of Isidore; in the *Vocabularium* of Papias, *Tethys uxor oceani mater nimpharum*, which has no validity for the passage in our text.

also more specifically described in V': *armauit se signo crucis* H' / *armauit se dominico tropheo in quattuor partes* V'. Brendan's orders also tend to be reinforced in V' by means of an expansion: *tendite uela et navigate* H' / *tendite in altum plus uela et simul navigate quantocius* V'. The language of the text also seems to be reworked in some details of the circumstances in V': *alii [demoniorum] post famulos Christi iactabant massas, alii supra alteram partem* according to H' (the action is simultaneous—some draw the navigators in one direction, some in another); in V' the distributive is missing (*alii . . . alii* gives way to *alii* [. . .] *alter*), but the situation seems to direct attention to the intensity of the action: *alii iactabant post famulos Christi massas in mare et alter super alterum iactabant suam massam* (the action seems rather to correspond to successive interventions, one after the other, in which there is an increase in intensity).

Lastly, the similarity between the two versions is real and we cannot deny that there is direct knowledge on the part of one of the writers. There are chapters in which the variation is minimal, but H' is characterised by its sobriety of expression, in contrast with the expansions in V'; in certain cases the expansion is redundant, but in others it adds complementary circumstances (geographical orientations, for instance) or makes discursive connections (*sicut predixerat uir dei; et uenerunt ad portum*), it even reinforces circumstances (of time—*diei sancti*; of action—*cum autem nauigassent*); sometimes it is a question of formulating a commentary—*reficiendo sine ulla esurie et siti permanentes leti omnes*—this commentary is to be found in the narrative parts as well as in the dialogue; at times the expansion repeats elements already introduced in the text: in ch. 26 the information on Brother Paul's sojourn on his island is given twice.

One should not insist, but it is not easy, or possible, to decide on the way the text has developed, or on the dependence between versions of the same text. The rhetorical mechanisms of textual alteration are theoretically defined: amplification, movement, transposition, transformation (*adiectio, detractio, transmutatio, immutatio*). But these mechanisms function in both directions, because they are possibilities at the disposal of a textual community and one cannot know how they have evolved, or their origin. They must not be confused with résumé, gloss or other forms of work.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the survival of the text is an

<sup>45</sup> One should perhaps study the 'historia' on the liturgical office (which abbreviates an original text in order to adapt it to a choral reading); the dislocation of

open process which, as a rule, does not offer specific documented stages, and does not follow explicit decisions, and one must deduce it from clues. Philology must not, even so, ignore this dimension, nor must it leave it circumscribed when studying the manuscript evidence. We may not always—perhaps it is even rarely the case—be able to reach conclusions concerning the history and the genesis of texts or versions of them. Despite all this, it is the route for study which opens up, and this route is broad, provided there are motivated readers: abbreviation is not a minor exercise in relation to the exercise of amplification. To recall the impossible challenge (known by the commentators who defended Virgil from the snares of Homer): who will dare take the club away from Hercules? It is easier to add to it the lion skin. . . . The anamorphosis we evoked at a certain point in our analysis usually goes in the direction of fluidity, movement, repetition, or even the unusual, which does not suggest less harmony on one side or the other.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the object of our study, we are not in a position to come to a conclusion concerning the priority of one of the versions of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*. Certainly they are not irreducible, but the conditions of diversification are not clear to me. My analysis inclines me towards the prominence of amplification, all the more so as in the present state of the abridged version there are features which illustrate borrowings (the case of the doublets in one of the Portuguese manuscripts reveals a genuine option for a well-known version); there are also contaminations (as is seen in the Parisinus testimony).

However that may be, our horizons are widened, the texts circulate and people appropriate them and modify them in accordance with changes in culture and in life itself.

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a hagiographical text for the second nocturne of matins does not rework, at least not entirely, the basic version.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Severo Sarduy, *Barroco*, Paris 1975.

## BRENDAN AND MOSES

Giovanni Orlandi

That the early medieval *peregrinatio* of the Irish monks in the Atlantic Ocean was conceived as a sort of continuation—*mutatis mutandis*—of the so-called Desert Fathers' search for solitude in the Egyptian Thebais is all too well known.<sup>1</sup> Not only did the *Vitae patrum* literature circulate in the far western island,<sup>2</sup> but so also did several Latin translations of biblical *apocrypha*. In their narrative parts these texts told similar stories,<sup>3</sup> or at least described long journeys to remote foreign lands, often interrupted by encounters with barbarous populations and endangered by thirst, attacks from hostile people etc.<sup>4</sup> This kind of tale sometimes included voyages, such as the crossing recounted in the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud Anthropophagos*, in which the apostle Andrew and his companions, starting from Palestine, reached Mermedonia, the centre of the barbarian land where they were bound to meet their martyrdom. Such a text, a translation from the Greek possibly executed in late antiquity in a very vulgar

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, K. Hughes, 'On an Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 77 (1959), 305–31 (316–17); H. Löwe, 'Westliche Peregrinatio und Mission. Ihr Zusammenhang mit den länder- und völkerkundlichen Kenntnissen des früheren Mittelalters', in: *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale*, Settimane di studio, 29 (Spoleto 1983), vol. 1, 327–72 (328).

<sup>2</sup> Suffice it to refer to entries such as 'Antonii monachi apud Tebaidem Egipti' or 'fēil Antóin manaig' or 'Pauli senis heremitae' or 'Machair' (St Macarius Romanus) in the earliest martyrologies; cf. J. Hennig, 'Studies in the Latin Texts of the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, of *Félire Oengusso* and of *Félire húi Gormain*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 69 C (1970), 45–112 (83–84, 87, 98).

<sup>3</sup> D. N. Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish. A Preliminary Investigation', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 73 C (1973), 299–338; M. McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*, Dublin 1975; for an Irish version of the apocryphal *Vita Adae et Evae* see *The Irish Adam and Eve Story from Saltair na Rann*, ed. and transl. D. Greene and F. Kelly, comm. B. O. Murdoch, Dublin 1976.

<sup>4</sup> See in particular K. Zelzer, 'Zu den lateinischen Fassungen der Thomasakten', *Wiener Studien*, 84 (1971), 161–79 (*ibid.*, 85 (1972), 185–212 (189), about the insular dissemination of the *Acta Thomae apostoli*); and in general G. Orlandi, 'Temi e correnti nelle leggende di viaggio dell'Occidente alto-medievale', in: *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale*, 2 vols, Spoleto 1983 (Settimane di studio, 29), vol. 2, 523–75 (538–43).

form of Latin,<sup>5</sup> must have circulated in Ireland among various other apocryphal books in the early Middle Ages, for it betrays so many striking linguistic features in common with the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*<sup>6</sup> that it is to be taken for granted that one text influenced the other in various respects.<sup>7</sup> This, incidentally, together with the circulation in the British islands of hagiographies composed in Merovingian Latin,<sup>8</sup> may explain several aspects of the language of the *Navigatio* which have been considered as typical of non-Hibernian Latin.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Edition and linguistic analysis in F. Blatt, *Die lateinischen Bearbeitungen der Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud anthropophagos*, Gießen 1930 (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 12). Blatt's edition reproduces the text of MS Rome, Bibl. Casanatense, 1104.

<sup>6</sup> Quotations from this text (introduced by *Nav.*) mention, first, chapter numbers according to the edition by C. Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Mediaeval Studies, 16), followed by paragraph numbers according to my edition, in preparation for a long time and issued in a provisional form in 1968 (*Navigatio sancti Brendani*, ed. Ioannes Orlandi, vol. 2 [Milano, 1968]), and, in square brackets, by line numbers according to Selmer's edition. I quote the text according to my edition.

<sup>7</sup> Blatt, ed., *Acta Andreae*, § 4 (p. 41): '*Tibi enim precipio, ut surgas mane, descende ad litus maris [...] et inveniatis naviculam parvam, ascendite in ea ut proficiscaris itinere quam tibi precepi*' (cf. *Nav.* 1, 13–14 [31–34] cited below [n. 12]; 26, 32 [60–61]: '*Cras autem proficiscere ad litus maris, et invenes navim ibi in quam intrabis, quae te ducet ad locum ubi expectabis diem mortis tuae*'); § 6 (p. 45): '*anima et corpora nostra tradidimus in manibus domini nostri iesu christi*' (cf. *Nav.* 2, 5 [11–12]: '*corpora nostra tradidimus in manus tuas*'); § 7 (pp. 46–47): '*ita enim insurrexerat illis validissima tempestate maris, et fluctuum*' (cf. *Nav.* 16, 24 [44–45]: '*erat tempesta in mari et ventus fortissimus et inaequalitas aeris de pluvia et grandine*'); § 7 (p. 47): '*sed ubique tu nobis sive <in> vitam sive <in> mortem, non te deserimus*', and § 8 (p. 49): '*diligunt te discipuli tui, quoniam tecum et in vita, et in morte ire parati sunt*' (cf. *Nav.* 2, 6 [12–13]: '*parati sumus sive ad mortem sive ad vitam tecum ire*'); § 8 (p. 49): '*refice eos verbis tuis de mirabilia magistri tui*' (cf. *Nav.* 1, 5 [13–14]: '*refice animas nostras de diversis miraculis quae vidisti in oceano*'); *ibid.*: '*statim beatus andreas cepit confortare eos dicens, filioli mei [...] ne metuemini, non enim dominus derelinquet servos suos [...] timentes exclamavimus [...] voce magna dicentes, domine libera nos*' (cf. *Nav.* 16, 3–5 [5–9]: '*ad Dominum clamabant dicentes: "Libera nos, Domine [...]" Sanctus Brendanus confortabat illos dicens: "Nolite expavescere [...]. Deus [...] nos liberabit de ore istius bestiae"*'; 1, 30 [70–71]: '*coepi illos confortare dicens eis*'; 6, 3 [5–7]: '*Confestim sanctus Brendanus coepit illos confortare atque ammonere dicens: "Fratres, nolite formidare: Deus enim noster adiutor est"*'); etc.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. a reference to St Vaast of Arras in the earliest Irish martyrologies: '*translatio Vedasti*' (Hennig, *Studies in the Latin Texts*, 104), possibly derived not from an independent text so entitled, but rather from a chapter of the *Vita Vedasti* (ed. B. Krusch, in MGH Script. Merov., vol. 3, 412).

<sup>9</sup> See the interesting remarks by Bengt Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*, Uppsala 1965, 150–51, concluding a thorough analysis of the grammarian's language: '*die meisten der oben aus Malsachanus aufgeführten Vulgarismen sich auch in Italia- und Vulgata-Hss nachweisen liessen. [...] Wir wissen nicht, ob und wie viele Missionare von Gallien oder Italien nach Irland gekommen sind [...]. Von engen hiberno-gallischen Beziehungen in der Frühzeit zeugt u. a. die irische Schrift.*' ('Most of the vulgarisms cited above from

Another feature which has so far caused a considerable amount of discussion is the frame itself of the plot, the voyage to the *Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum*, undertaken in order to provide the future community of Brendan's monastery with a certain amount of land in a place surrounded by the Atlantic as its final refuge from an unspecified 'persecution of the Christians':<sup>10</sup> does this refer to an historical invasion<sup>11</sup> or does it stem from a vague, eschatological sense of fear?<sup>12</sup> Here, luckily, some fundamental research carried out by Richard Sharpe has finally provided the clue for dating a number of *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* back to the eighth or ninth century, thus furnishing the *Navigatio* with a reliable context.<sup>13</sup>

One of these texts, which have been preserved nearly intact in their original form by the late *Codex Salmanticensis*,<sup>14</sup> is the biography of St Fintán (or St Munnu), abbot of Taghmon, Leinster. At a certain point, the saint tells a friend a secret: "I have just come back from the Land of Promise, where the four of us established our places, that is, Columcille and I, [ . . . ] Kannech and Brendan nephew of Alte"—that is, Columba of Iona, Kannech of Aghaboe and Brendan of Clonfert. And he proceeds to specify the names of the four places allotted to them: Columcille had had *Ath Cain* (translated by Plummer as 'Fair Ford'), Fintán *Port Subi* ('Port Joy'), Kannech *Set Bethath* ('Path

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Malsachanus may be traced also in MSS of *Itala* and *Vulgata*. We do not know whether, or how many, missionaries came to Ireland from Gaul or Italy. Close Hiberno-Gallic relations in an early age are attested, *inter alia*, by the Irish script'. Cf. W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1988, 254. Links between France and Ireland in the 7th century—e.g., people sent from Gaul to Ireland in exile—are pointed out by several scholars in J.-M. Picard, ed., *Ireland and Northern France, A.D. 600–850*, Dublin 1991. On the other hand, many Vulgar Latin features can easily be found in the language of the earliest *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* (see below, n. 14), whose Irish origin is beyond any doubt.

<sup>10</sup> *Nav.* 28, 16 [30–32]: 'Post multa vero curricula temporum declarabitur ista terra successoribus vestris, quando Christianorum supervenerit persecutio' ('After the passage of many times this land will become known to your successors, when persecution of the Christians shall have come').

<sup>11</sup> One of the Irish voyage tales thematically linked with the *Navigatio*, the *Immram Snégdosa ocus Maic Riagla* (ed. and transl. W. Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, 9 (1888), 14–25), ends with a typical prophecy *ex eventu*, referring to the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the suggestion made by Mernóc to Barrind on the *Insula Deliciosa* in *Nav.* 1, 13–14 [30–35], a passage (given below, n. 39) foretelling events which will happen 'in novissimo tempore'.

<sup>13</sup> R. Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives. An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Oxford 1991, 297–339.

<sup>14</sup> I quote according to the edition by W. W. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex Codice Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi*, Brussel 1965 (Subsidia hagiographica, 28).

of Life') and Brendan *Aur Phardus* ('Brink of Paradise').<sup>15</sup> The last place named squares remarkably well with what, at the beginning of the *Navigatio*, Barrind says to the monks of the community of Mernóc living in the *Insula Deliciosa*, when he comes back from the *Terra Repromissionis*: 'I began to console them, saying to them: "Think, brothers, only of good. You are living undoubtedly at the gate of Paradise. Near here is an island which is called the Promised Land of the Saints where night does not fall nor day end. Your abbot Mernóc goes there. An angel of the Lord guards it"' etc.<sup>16</sup> Thus the followers of Mernóc were really 'on the brink of Paradise', and the Paradise near them, a sort of Terrestrial Paradise surrounded by water, was in the *Terra Repromissionis*. It is most improbable, in my opinion, that the passage from the *Vita Fintani* quoted above depends on the *Navigatio*: the exact mention of the four place names in their Irish form seems to point to a local tradition which is reflected in both texts.

Another element in common is the *Mons Lapidis* or *Lapidum*, that is a place in Donegal, in the vicinity of which the Promised Land was believed to be situated. "In case of extreme danger", says Fintán, "you'll go out to Slieve League in the land of Banagh, a settlement stretching into the sea, and there you'll set sail [...] towards the

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<sup>15</sup> *Vita prior s. Fintani seu Munnu* 31: '*Ego nunc veni a Terra Repromissionis, in qua nos quatuor congregati nostra loca constituimus: scilicet Columba Kille et ego, duo loca nostra simul circa vadum consistunt; Kannechus vero et Brandinus macu Althe, circa alterum vadum sua loca consistunt. Nomen autem loci Columbe Kille Ath Cain vocatur, et nomen loci mei Port Subi; nomen loci Kannechi Set Bethath vocatur, et nomen loci Brandani Aur Phardus. Si ergo vobis temptatio perveniet quam sustinere non poteritis, exibitis ad terram illam sanctam, et licitum est si in hoc loco semper vobiscum sint duodecim plaustra nova et duodecim cacabi enei ad preparationem ambulationis. Exibitis ergo ad Montem Lapidum, in regione generis Bogeni, ad consistorium quod extendit in mare, et ibi incipietis navigare, occidentes boves vestros [...], et in pellibus bovum vestrorum prospere navigabitis ad terram sanctam repromissionis.*' Cf. C. Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, 2 vols, Oxford 1910, repr. Dublin 1999, vol. 2, 238.

<sup>16</sup> *Nav.* 1, 30–32 [70–80]: '*Cum haec audissem coepi illos confortare dicens eis: "Nolite, fratres, putare aliquid nisi bonum. Vestra conversatio procul dubio est ante portam paradisi. Hic prope est insula quae vocatur Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum, ubi nec nox imminet nec dies finitur. Illuc frequentatur abbas Memoc; angeli enim Domini custodiunt illam. Nonne cognoscitis in odore vestimentorum nostrorum quod in paradiso Dei fuimus?"*' Tunc fratres responderunt dicentes: '*Abba, novimus quia fuistis in paradiso Dei; spatium maris, ubi est ille paradisu, ignoramus. Nam saepe fragrantiam vestimentorum abbatis nostri probavimus: paene usque ad quadraginta dies tenebantur ab odore*'. I quote from the English transl. by J. J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan. Journey to the Promised Land. Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, Mountrath (Portlaoise) 1976, repr. New Jersey 1978, which disagrees from my text whenever this disagrees from Selmer's (so here Selmer printed: '*Angelus enim Domini custodit illam*', and O'Meara translates accordingly).



holy promised land".<sup>17</sup> Whereas in the *Navigatio* the *Insula Deliciosa*, where Mernóc migrates, is said to be 'near the *Mons Lapidis*' without any further specification,<sup>18</sup> the addition of the *Vita Fintani*, 'in regione generis *Bogeni*' (*Tír Bogaine* in Irish) makes it clear that *Mons Lapidis* is a Latin translation of the Irish *Slíab Liac*, the name of a mountain on the coast of Donegal whose English form is Slieve League. And, according to both texts, the voyage to the *Terra Repromissionis* is undertaken by *curragh*, as is made clear in the *Navigatio* by the detailed description of how Brendan's boat was made,<sup>19</sup> and in the *Vita Fintani*, by the reference to the slaughtering of oxen and the use of their hides to construct the boats.<sup>20</sup> Thus the *Navigatio*, for so many scholars an 'anomalous' product of the Continent, is confirmed as an Irish production, thoroughly embedded in a local context.

Still more interesting is the way the future voyage is predicted in the *Vita Fintani*: 'If you are subjected to a *temptatio* you are unable to stand, you'll go out to that sacred land'.<sup>21</sup> This matches what the angel who appeared to Brendan and his fourteen companions in the Promised Land foretold them about the destiny of their community: "After the passage of many times this land will become known to your successors, when persecution of the Christians shall have come".<sup>22</sup> *Temptatio* does not mean 'temptation' in a spiritual sense, but 'attack', a direct blow from some enemy, or from *the* Enemy, to the monastery<sup>23</sup>—a trial which, conceived as a possibility in general terms in the *Vita Fintani*, and more explicitly in the *Navigatio* as persecution

<sup>17</sup> For the Latin text see above (n. 15).

<sup>18</sup> *Nav.* 1, 7 [16–19]: "*Filiolus meus Mernoc* [here Barrind is speaking] *atque procurator pauperum Christi confugit a facie mea et voluit esse solitarius. Invenit insulam iuxta Montem Lapidis, nomine Insula Deliciosa*" ("My son Mernóc, steward of Christ's poor, left me and sought to live the life of a solitary. He found an island near Slieve League, called the Delightful Island").

<sup>19</sup> *Nav.* 4, 3 [7–9]: "*fecerunt naviculam levissimam [...] et cooperuerunt illam coriis bovinis atque rubricatis in cortice roborino*" ('They constructed a light boat [...]. They covered it with ox-hides tanned with the bark of oak').

<sup>20</sup> See above (n. 15).

<sup>21</sup> The Latin text is again to be found at n. 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Nav.* 28, 16–17 [30–34]: "*Post multa vero curricula temporum declarabitur ista terra successoribus vestris, quando Christianorum supervenerit persecutio.*"

<sup>23</sup> For a historical and cultural frame for this conception, see P. Tomea, 'Rappresentazioni e funzioni del cielo e della terra nelle fonti agiografiche del Medioevo occidentale', in: *Cieli e terre nei secoli XI–XII. Orizzonti, percezioni, rapporti*, Milano 1998 (Misc. del Centro di studi medioevali, 15), 321–40; id., 'Il "proelium" cristiano: scene dai testi agiografici occidentali', in: *Militia Christi e Crociata nei secoli XI–XIII*, Milano 1992 (Misc. del Centro di studi medioevali, 13), 616–26.

of the Christians which will occur many years later, is in both texts prophesied as the direct cause of the migration of a whole monastic community. Such collective *peregrinationes* were not infrequent in early medieval Ireland; and the process of leaving one's country for foreign lands is expressed in the *Vita Fintani* through the verb *exire*, an image common to the term *egressio*, whereby a migration from Brendan's abbey of Clonfert is recorded in the ninth century by an entry of the *Martyrology of Tallaght: Egressio familiae Brendani*.<sup>24</sup>

In another of the earliest hagiographies preserved by the *Codex Salmanticensis*, the *Vita Sancti Columbae de Tír dá Glas* (Terryglas, in the same region as Clonfert), it is said that Columba 'one day went out to see the ocean of the great sea. There, after walking to and fro on the shore, he stopped at once on a very large rock and prophesied: "At the end of time my people carrying my relics will start from this rock and migrate to the promised land in the sea". And that rock until now has been called Columba's Rock'.<sup>25</sup> Barrind too, in the *Navigatio*, recounts how he, strolling with his monk Mernóc along the shore of the *Insula Deliciosa*, was persuaded by his 'son' to undertake a voyage: "Father, embark in the boat and let us sail westwards to the island which is called the Promised Land of the Saints which God will give to those who come after us at the end of time".<sup>26</sup> The *peregrinatio* is then seen from an eschatological perspective: both in the *Vita Columbae* and in the *Navigatio* the migration is foretold as a way of escaping from an unspecified enemy, easily identifiable in Antichrist according to St John's warning: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time"; and later on it is confirmed that the Antichrist is already in this world.<sup>27</sup> In the early Middle Ages, as is well known, it was easy to

<sup>24</sup> R. I. Best and H. J. Lawlor, ed., *The Martyrology of Tallaght from the Book of Leinster, and MS. 5100–5104 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, London 1931 (Henry Bradshaw Society, 68), 273. For the biblical models of such use of *egredi/exire* (cf. the Greek *exodos*) see below (n. 41 and n. 42); R. Poelman, 'Le thème du pèlerinage dans l'Ancien Testament', *Lumen vitae*, 13 (1958), 209–26 (214–15).

<sup>25</sup> *Vita Columbae de Tír dá Glas* 21 (Heist, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* [n. 14] 230): 'Quadam autem die, sanctus Columba <exivit> ut oceanum maris magni videret. Cumque ibi per ripam maris huc illucque ambularet, subito stetit super petram latissimam et prophetice dixit: "In novissimis temporibus populus meus cum meis reliqui<i>s de hac petra migrabit ad terram repromissionis in mari." Et petra ista vocabatur usque hodie Petra Columbe.'

<sup>26</sup> For the Latin text see below (n. 39).

<sup>27</sup> *Vulg.* I Ioh. 2: 18; 4: 1–3.

identify the Antichrist with the enemy of the moment, for many people quite naturally contemplated the difficult times they had to endure through the lens of the final scenes of the *Apocalypse*. Thus, for example, the pseudo-Methodius in his *Apocalypse* (7th century) perceived the work of the Antichrist in the war waged against the Christians by the Islamic people.<sup>28</sup>

My attempt to date the *Navigatio* after the first substantial Viking raids in Ireland in the first half of the ninth century<sup>29</sup>—a chronology proposed anew by Michaela Zelzer, twenty years later<sup>30</sup>—could not convince David Dumville, who envisaged in the prophecy of chapter 28 a merely eschatological, that is a non-historical, perspective and preferred a period before 800, possibly even before 700. The basis for this early dating was an acute interpretation of the heraldic data mentioned in the first paragraph of the text;<sup>31</sup> an explanation which, however, failed to persuade a specialist such as Doris Edel, who thinks that such data may fit a later period just as well.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In the last phases of the story, the *filius perditionis* appears (easily identifiable in the Antichrist), and, at the same time, the *rex Romanorum* [the Byzantine emperor] climbs the Golgotha and honours the Holy Cross, but dies briefly later; whereupon Evil triumphs on the earth and the Antichrist is enthroned at Jerusalem before being slain by the Son of Man. Cf. *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die älteren griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, ed. W. J. Aerts and G. A. A. Kortekaas, Lovanii 1998 (CSCO, 569–70 [Subsidia, 97–98]), vol. 1, p. 5 [inside the ‘Einleitung’]; § 13, 21 and § 14, 1 (p. 185); § 14, 10–11 (p. 195). It may be surmised that the transmission of the Latin version of pseudo-Methodius has some link with Ireland, as the earliest known copy (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 611, s. VIII<sup>1</sup>) might have been executed at Luxeuil, a monastery of Irish foundation (cf. CLA VII 604c). Cf. P. C. Jacobsen, ‘Die *Navigatio sancti Brendani*’, in: *Beschreibung der Welt, zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*, ed. X. von Ertzdorff, Amsterdam 2000 (Chloe, 31), 63–95 (68).

<sup>29</sup> I. [= G.] Orlandi, *Navigatio sancti Brendani. I. Introduzione*, [Milano and Varese 1968], 72–73.

<sup>30</sup> M. Zelzer, ‘Frühe irische Amerikafahrten und monastische Reform. Zur *Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis*’, *Wiener humanistische Blätter*, 31 (1989), 66–87, here 83–84; cf. eadem, ‘Die Geschichte vom Seefahrer Brendan im Dienst der karolingischen Klosterreform’, in: *Neunter Internationaler Regula-Benedicti-Kongress*, St. Ottilien 1997 [*Regulae Benedicti studia*, 19 (1997), 175–82 (181)].

<sup>31</sup> D. N. Dumville, ‘Two Approaches to the Dating of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*’, *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser, 29 (1988), 87–102.

<sup>32</sup> D. Edel, ‘De Ierse achtergronden van de Reis van Sint Brandaan’, *Nederlandse Letterkunde*, 2 (1997), 365–73 (368): ‘De door hem [i.e. Dumville] geconsulteerde historische bronnen leveren nl. even goede argumenten voor het jaar 851 als terminus ad quem’; *ibid.* 372 n. 13: ‘In dat jaar stierf de laatste koning genoemde genus Eogeni stagni Len (Geslacht van de Eoganacht van Loch Léin). Opmerkelijk is dat deze Olchobur, die van 847 tot 851 regeerde, ook abt van Emly was, de belangrijkste stichting van die Ailbe in wiens eilandklooster de reisgenoten in NB 12 en 20 de kerstperiode doorbrengen.’ I thank Dr Strijbosch for explaining to me the content of this passage.

I shall not venture now to take a stand on this vexed question; I just can see no real contrast between the theological vision of an Antichrist coming at the end of ages and the actual fear of a more or less imminent danger from some external enemy.<sup>33</sup> Viking destruction had begun at the end of the eighth century: Lindisfarne, linked to Iona as early as the seventh century, was plundered for the first time in 793, and the news must have quickly reached the motherland. Nor do we know, owing to lack of sources, whether the gathering of such storms was felt already some decades before 800.<sup>34</sup> The inkling of a world approaching its end—the famous *mundus iam seniscit* of the pseudo Fredegar<sup>35</sup>—may well have been shared in the Ireland of the early Middle Ages; and the *Navigatio* was perhaps an expression of this frame of mind. I am therefore inclined to interpret it—beyond any possible hint of typology, tropology or allegory according to the exegetical tradition<sup>36</sup>—as meaning, after all, a real voyage, or better still as the literary reflex of an historical scenario in which some people in the monastic milieu saw a chance to prepare an escape route, whether or not the end of time was felt to be imminent.

Brendan, from this perspective, is certainly pushed into action by his own curiosity,<sup>37</sup> and his adventures are brought about by God's wish to let him know his *secreta* in the ocean;<sup>38</sup> yet, on the other hand, he turns himself into a sailor intent on reaching a land to

<sup>33</sup> For the frequent tendency to identify any enemy with infernal powers see, e.g., P. Tomea's discussion of M. McCormick, 'Liturgie et guerre des Carolingiens à la première croisade', in: *Militia Christi' e Crociata nei secoli XI–XIII*, Milano 1992 (Misc. del Centro di studi medioevali, 13), 209–38, discussion at 239–40 (240).

<sup>34</sup> It has to be remembered that some threat from the far north began to be felt in Gaul as early as the 6th century; cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 3, 3 (ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison (MGH Script. Merov., vol. 1, 1), p. 99, ll. 5–13), on the invasion attempted by the Danish king Chlochilaichus (the Hygelac of the *Beowulf*).

<sup>35</sup> *Chronica* 4 prol. (ed. B. Krusch, MGH Script. Merov., vol. 2, 123, 17).

<sup>36</sup> These ways of interpreting the Holy Writ may also be found in insular texts, or texts with insular diffusion, such as *Pauca problemsmata de enigmatibus ex tomis canonicis*, vol. 1, ed. G. MacGinty, Turnhout 2000 (CCCM, 173), 59; 66; 115; 170. According to D. A. Bray, 'Allegory in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Viator*, 26 (1995), 1–10 (3), the *Navigatio* may be linked to the religious atmosphere of the *Céli Dé* monastic reform, so that 'the sea journey is still an ascetic ideal, a voyage for the love of God, but allegorically rooted in the stability of monastic life [...]'.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> After hearing Barrind's report of his voyage, Brendan tells his monks (*Nav.* 2, 3 [5–7]): '*Terram, de qua locutus est pater Barindus, Repromissionis Sanctorum in corde meo proposui illam quaerere*' ('I have resolved in my heart [...] to go in search of the Promised Land of the Saints of which father Barrind spoke').

<sup>38</sup> At the end of the voyage, a 'young man' welcomes Brendan in the Promised Land with these words (*Nav.* 28, 12–13 [24–27]): '*Ecce terra quam quaesisti per multum tempus. Ideo non potuisti invenire illam quia Deus voluit tibi ostendere diversa sua secreta*

which his monastic *familia* would move one day in order to be safe. The character in Holy Scripture best fitting this ideal is Abraham, for, as everyone knew, he did visit the Promised Land, although the people of Israel would only take possession of it several generations later.<sup>39</sup> The reference to Abraham as a model is very common in the lives of pilgrim saints on both sides of the Channel. Here it is easy to find phrases like ‘following the example of Abraham the patriarch’<sup>40</sup> or the quotation of *Genesis* 12: 1, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee’<sup>41</sup>—and this is the biblical passage cited by way of introduction to Brendan’s voyages in two of the recensions of the *Vita sancti Brendani*.<sup>42</sup> Such a quotation is not repeated in the *Navigatio*, although Brendan behaves according to its principles. When he comes back to Kerry, his place of origin, to organize the voyage, he refrains from visiting his family, concentrating instead on the construction of his boat and on getting the supplies for the navigation.<sup>43</sup>

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*in oceano magno*” (“There before you lies the land which you have sought for a long time. You could not find it immediately because God wanted to show you his varied secrets in the great ocean”).

<sup>39</sup> After showing Abraham the land of Canaan, God so admonished him (*Vulg.* Gen. 13: 17): ‘*surge et perambula terram in longitudine et in latitudine sua, quia tibi daturus sum eam*’ (‘Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee’). Whence a possible echo in *Nav.* 1, 13–14 [30–35]: ‘*Pernocantibus nobis et perambulantibus totam insulam, meus filioli duxit me ad litus maris contra occidentem, ubi erat navicula, et dixit mihi: “Pater, ascende in navim et navigemus contra occidentalem plagam ad insulam quae dicitur Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum, quam Deus daturus est successoribus nostris in novissimo tempore”*’ (cf. *Vulg.* Ex. 12, 25; *Deut.* 4, 1). The translation of this passage has been given above, p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> Several examples are mentioned by R. Poelman, ‘Le Thème du pèlerinage’ (n. 24), 210; J. Leclercq, ‘Monachisme et pérégrination du IX<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, *Studia monastica*, 3 (1961), 33–52; J. Semmler, ‘*Navigatio Brendani*’, in: *Reisen in reale und mythische Ferne. Reiseliteratur in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed. P. Wunderli, Düsseldorf 1993 (*Studia humaniora*, 22), 103–23 (110 n. 41); Y. Hemmi, ‘The Promised Land of the Saints in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*’, *Geibun-Kenkyu*, 73 (1997), 48–67 (51).

<sup>41</sup> ‘*Dixit autem Dominus ad Abram: “Egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui in terram quam monstrabo tibi”*’. Cf. Jacobsen, ‘*Die Navigatio sancti Brendani*’ (n. 28), 67–68.

<sup>42</sup> *Vita prima sancti Brendani* 12, Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, 103–04: ‘*Illius vero precepti quod dictum est Abrahe: “Exi de terra tua et cognatione tua,” non immemor effectus, peregre proficisci ardentem volebat desiderio*’ (‘Not forgetting the order issued to Abraham, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred” he [Brendan] longed with ardent wish to travel abroad’). The same quotation is introduced in the Life of the Irish St Caddroe, *Vita b. Cadroe abbatis* § 13 (AA. SS.<sup>3</sup>, Mart. vol. 1, 475 E), with the same variant *exi* for *egredere*.

<sup>43</sup> *Nav.* 4, 1–2 [2–5]: ‘*profectus est in ultimam partem regionis suae ubi demorabantur parentes eius. Attamen noluit illos videre, sed in cuiusdam summitate montis extendentis se longe in*

Yet on the whole, one of the most original aspects of this text is the mass of links one can find between incidents in Brendan's voyage and episodes of the life of Moses. In the Introduction to his German translation of Benedeit's *Voyage de saint Brendan*, Ernstpeter Ruhe envisaged in the process of turning Brendan into a new Moses, of taking Moses as model to reshape Brendan's figure, the characterizing feature of this vernacular poem as against its Latin source—an 'entscheidende Neuorientierung' conveying into the Anglo-Norman text 'eine völlig neue Dignität'.<sup>44</sup> Two conscious and overt references to episodes involving Moses in the Old Testament (his prophecy about Abiron and Dathan in *Numbers* 16: 28–34<sup>45</sup>; the final ascension of a mount from which Moses has the vision of the Promised Land he will never visit in person, *Deut.* 34: 1–4) are revealed by Ruhe in Benedeit's work; which enables him to maintain that further parallels may be pointed out in the course of the French poem, although he admits that various elements are to be already found in the *Navigatio*.<sup>46</sup> Such elements will be analyzed and increased in number in the following pages.

I do not maintain that Moses was *the* model which shaped Brendan's character in the *Navigatio*; I just wish to point out the sheer number of passages in which the author uses facts or descriptions related to the prophet's life in order to depict an Irish abbot's adventures. Not that comparisons with Moses are lacking in late antique and medieval hagiography; an article by Claudia Rapp may be referred to in this respect, which, however, examines mainly Greek sources, noticing many cases of such parallels involving episcopal characters.<sup>47</sup> Gregory

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*oceanum, in loco qui dicitur Sedes Brendani, fixit tentorium*' ('he set out for a distant part of his native region where his parents were living. But he did not wish to see them. He pitched his tent at the edge of a mountain stretching far out into the ocean, in a place called Brendan's Seat'). Moreover, when the abbot asks advice from his monks as to the expedition he is planning, their answer surrenders their will to his authority in these terms (2, 5 [10–12]): '*Nonne parentes nostros dimisimus? Nonne hereditatem nostram despeximus et corpora nostra tradidimus in manus tuas?*'" ('"Have we not left our parents behind? Have we not spurned our inheritance and given our bodies into your hands?"').

<sup>44</sup> Benedeit, *Le voyage de saint Brendan*, transl. and intr. by E. Ruhe with the collab. of B. Beck and S. Lippert, München 1977 (Klassische Texte des romanischen Mittelalters 16), pp. 22–25, here pp. 24–25.

<sup>45</sup> *Les dous de vus avrat Satan | od Abiron e od Dathan* (vss. 199–200); cf. Ruhe, *Le voyage*, 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25: "[...] aufgrund vieler, bereits in der lateinischer Vorlage enthaltener Elemente".

<sup>47</sup> C. Rapp, 'Comparison, Paradigm and the Case of Moses in Panegyric and

of Tours, in his hagiographies, compares St Julian to Moses as a military chief<sup>48</sup> and St Gallus for the patience with which he bore many injustices;<sup>49</sup> other cases may be found in Irish hagiography. Limiting the inquiry to the main collections of the *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, there are several citations of, or allusions to, the miracle of the Red Sea passage,<sup>50</sup> the fast of forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai,<sup>51</sup> the vision of the burning shrub on Mount Oreb<sup>52</sup> (also mentioned in the *Navigatio*),<sup>53</sup> the miracle of making the water spring from a rock in the desert,<sup>54</sup> and so on. In the *Life of St Abbán*

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Hagiography', in: *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. Whitby, Leiden 1998 (Mnemosyne Suppl., 183), 277–98.

<sup>48</sup> *De passione et virtutibus Iuliani*, 7 (ed. B. Krusch, MGH Script. Merov., vol. 1, 567, 37).

<sup>49</sup> *Liber vitae patrum* 6, *De sancto Gallo* 4 (ibid. 683, 1); cf. *Liber* 9, *De sancto Patrocolo* prol. (ibid. 702, 8), where Gregory refers to 'egregia Moysei vatis prudentia' ('Moses the Poet's excelling wisdom').

<sup>50</sup> In the *Vita Geraldi* 11 (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 112), a gang of bandits take refuge in an island of a lake, pursued by the saint: 'Cui cum introitum ex voluntate propria ei non preberent, Deus, qui mare rubrum ad libitum voluntatis Moysi servi sui desiccavit, aquam illam, acsi nunquam ibi fuisset, anichilavit' ('As they did not want to give him [St Gerald] access voluntarily, God, who dried up the Red Sea according to His servant Moses's will, annihilated that water as if it had never been there'). A similar comparison is introduced in the *Vita Boecii* 16 (ibid., vol. 1, 91). Another reference in the *Vita Brendani* is quoted below, n. 54. The story was popular on the Continent too; cf. e.g. the anonymous *Vita Corbiniani* (BHL 1948), 3 (Krusch, ed., MGH Script. Merov., vol. 6, 601, 1–2).

<sup>51</sup> *Vita Maedoc* 33 (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 153): 'beatissimus pontifex Moedhog secundum exemplum Moysi et Helie, ymmo secundum exemplum [...] Domini nostri Iesu Christi, quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus ieiunavit in civitate sua Ferna' ('the saintliest bishop Maedoc, following the example of Moses and Elijah, indeed following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, fasted in his community of Ferns for forty days and forty nights').

<sup>52</sup> The *Vita Tigernaci* (Tigernach of Clones) 3 (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 2, 262) tells a singular adventure: 'sanctus puer a piratis [...] capitur, et ad regem Britannorum captivus ducitur. Qui pro venusti vultus specie [...] in tantum dilectus est, ut eum in lecto suo secum dormire permetteret. Set tanquam alter rubus Moysi apparens, lectus regius multotiens ardere videbatur. Tunc regina dixit: "Puer Hiberniensis hunc ignem de celo super nos descendere facit. Quapropter a nobis removeatur, et inter nostros filios in alio lecto iaceat"' ('The saintly boy is captured by the pirates and taken prisoner to the king of Britain. And he loved him so much for the beauty of his face, that he let him sleep with him in his bed. But the king's bed was often seen in flames, as if it were another shrub appearing to Moses. Whereupon the queen said: "The Irish boy makes fire come down upon us. Therefore be he taken out of here and placed in another bed with our sons"' ). Gregory of Tours too mentions the burning shrub in his *Liber in gloria confessorum* 38 (MGH Script. Merov. vol. 1, 771, 28); cf. *Hist.* 3 prol. (ibid., p. 96, 13).

<sup>53</sup> 12, 71 [140–2]: 'Nonne legisti rubum ardentem in monte Synai? Et tamen remansit ipse rubus inlaesus ab igne' ('"Have you not read of the bush burning at Mount Sinai? Yet that bush was unaffected by the fire"' ).

<sup>54</sup> *Vita Ailbei* 18 (version of the *Codex Salmanticensis*, Heist, ed., *Vitae sanctorum*



of Moyarney the saint is explicitly presented by God to his people as a guide, 'a pious and gentle chief, like Moses, who shall lead you from this desert to the real land of the promise'<sup>55</sup>—a leader, in this case in a spiritual sense, guiding his flock from this world to the heavenly kingdom.<sup>56</sup> Comparisons with Moses also occur in the narrative of the *Vita Brendani*, especially in the version of the *Codex Insulensis*.<sup>57</sup>

In the *Navigatio*, on the contrary, Moses is never mentioned by name, but his deeds and the situations he was involved in, or he had to confront, are for the author a constant source of inspiration, though one nearly always finds them intermingled with narrative or descriptive elements from different sources. Thus the *Terra Repromissionis* is described as a 'terra spatiosa',<sup>58</sup> like Canaan in the *Exodus*,<sup>59</sup> the

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*Hiberniae*, 122–23): 'Tunc Albeus plebi miseratus, eo quod sine aqua esset, [...] inueniens saxum magnum, baculo suo percussit illud quatuor vicibus, et exierunt ab eo quatuor flumina [...]'. ('Then Ailbe, taking pity on the people, who were without water, found a big rock, knocked it four times with his rod, and out of it did four rivers spring'). Here the Mosaic model is not explicitly quoted but is obvious.

<sup>55</sup> *Vita Abbani* 14 (version of the *Codex Salmanticensis*, Heist, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, 263): 'dabo vobis pium et mansuetum ducem, qui tamquam alter Moyses vos de presenti deserto ad terram vere promissionis perducet.'

<sup>56</sup> This is made explicit in the version of the *Codex Kilkeniensis*, 19, which has a slightly different text (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, 16): 'dabo vobis pium et mansuetum ducem, ut Moysen, qui vos de hoc mundo ad regnum celeste secum perducet.'

<sup>57</sup> *Vita Brendani* 5 [*Vita Insulensis*] (Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, vol. 1, 100): 'Tanta deinceps vultum sancti Brandani Deus claritate illustraverat, ut in faciem eius, tamquam esset alter Moyses, [...] homines intendere non valerent' ('Then God illuminated Saint Brendan's face with a light so strong, that people, as if he were a second Moses, could not look at him') (allusion to Ex. 34: 29–30). Cf. *ibid.* 6 (p. 101): 'Sanctus puer Brendanus, velut alter Moyses in monte contemplationis positus, manus puras in oratione contra Amalechitas illos elevavit, atque virtutem eorum enervavit' ('The saintly boy Brendan, like another Moses standing on the watch-mount, raised his pure hands against those Amalechites and enfeebled their fortitude'); this episode [Ex. 17: 8–13] is also referred to by Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi Eboracensis* 13 [MGH Script. Merov., vol. 6, 208, 6]; 81 (p. 140): 'Puero vero erat mare quasi murus a dextris et a sinistris, sicut quondam Moysi et populo suo in mari rubro' ('And the sea was for the boy as a wall on his right and left, as it had been once for Moses and his people in the Red Sea').

<sup>58</sup> The phrase occurs both in Barrind's description (*Nav.* 1, 16 [38–39]: 'Transacto vero spatio quasi unius horae circumfulsit nos lux ingens et apparuit terra spatiosa et herbosa pomiferaque valde' ('But when we had spent about an hour like this a great light shone all around us, and there appeared to us a land wide, and full of grass and fruit')) and in the last chapter (28, 6 [12–13]: 'Porro ascendentibus de navi viderunt terram spatiosam ac plenam arboribus pomiferis sicut in tempore autumnali' ('On disembarking from the boat they saw a wide land full of trees bearing fruit as in autumn time')).

<sup>59</sup> *Vulg. Ex.* 3: 7–8 (God to Moses): 'Et sciens dolorem eius [Israel] descendi ut libe-



sacrifice of a lamb on the Island of Sheep (*agnus immaculatus*)<sup>60</sup> must depend on God's prescription to Moses recorded in the *Exodus* and elsewhere;<sup>61</sup> and when in the same place, on their first Maundy Thursday, the *procurator* provides Brendan and his companions with '*panes subcinericii*,'<sup>62</sup> this looks like an echo of the provisions made by Israel when they departed from Egypt.<sup>63</sup>

Before leaving Clonfert, our abbot decides, in agreement with his fourteen pilgrims, to fast for forty days: '*Definivit ergo sanctus Brendanus et hi qui cum eo erant ieiunium quadraginta dierum, semper per triduanas, et postea proficisci*.'<sup>64</sup> Here a relationship with Moses's fast on Mount Sinai, given various parallels with other Irish saints' lives,<sup>65</sup> seems to

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*rarem eum de manibus Aegyptiorum et educerem de terra illa in terram bonam et spatiosam, in terram quae fluit lacte et melle*" ("for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey"). Here already the land is described with some features of a *locus amoenus*.

<sup>60</sup> *Nav.* 9, 9 [18–19]: '*ait vir Dei uni ex fratribus: "Accipe agnum immaculatum de grege". Qui festinavit et fecit sicut sibi iussum fuerat*' ('the man of God spoke to one of the brothers: "Take a spotless lamb from the flock." The brother hurried and did as he had been enjoined').

<sup>61</sup> *Vulg. Ex.* 12: 3–5 (cf. 29: 39: '*tollat unusquisque agnum per familias et domos suas. [...] Erit autem agnus absque macula*' ('they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers. Your lamb shall be without blemish'); *Num.* 28: 3 (cf. 28: 9): '*Haec sunt sacrificia quae offerre debetis: agnos anniculos immaculatos duos cotidie [...]*' ('This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord, two lambs of the first year without spot day by day [...]').

<sup>62</sup> *Nav.* 9, 10 [20–22]: '*ecce apparuit illis vir habens in manu sportam plenam panibus subcinericiis et cetera quae necessaria erant*' ('a man appeared to them holding in his hand a basket full of bread, that had been baked under the ashes, and the other things that were necessary') [for the ceremonies of the day after].

<sup>63</sup> *Vulg. Ex.* 12: 39: '*fecerunt subcinericios panes azymos*' ('And they baked unleavened cakes from the dough'). But the same was prescribed by Abraham to Sarah (*Gen.* 18: 6): '*Adcelera: tria sata similiae commisce et fac subcinericios panes*' ('Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth').

<sup>64</sup> *Nav.* 3, 1 [1–2].

<sup>65</sup> *Tírechán, Collectanea de s. Patricio* 54 (L. Bieler, ed., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, Dublin 1979 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 10), 164, 18–22): '*In quatuor rebus similis fuit Moysi Patricius: (i) primo angelum de rubo audivit; (ii) quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus ieiunavit; (iii) quia annos centum viginti peregit in vita presenti; (iiii) ubi sunt ossa eius nemo novit*' ('Patrick was similar to Moses in four respects: (i) first, he heard the angel speaking from the shrub; (ii) he fasted forty days and forty nights; (iii) because he lived 120 years on the earth; (iv) nobody knows where his bones are'). *Vita Patricii secunda* prol. (L. Bieler, ed., *Four Latin Lives of St. Patrick*, Dublin 1971 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 8), 47, 20–24): '*Et sicut Moyses in monte Syna quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus ieiunavit, ita sanctus Patricius, quando catervas demonum contra se repugnantium virtute ieiuniorum et orationum in fugam converterat et de Hybernia expulerat, quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus ieiunavit*' ('And as Moses fasted forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai, so St Patrick fasted forty days and forty nights when

me more probable than the symbolic link which has been suggested with Jesus's forty days in the desert,<sup>66</sup> all the more as, in the relevant passages of the *Exodus*, Moses climbs the mountain after crossing a fog ('*medium nebulae*'),<sup>67</sup> which means that direct contact with the divinity is attained beyond a *nebula* or *caligo*, just as both Barrind and Brendan, in the *Navigatio*, have to pass through a thick vapour obscuring the air<sup>68</sup> before reaching land in a place where 'the light is Christ'.<sup>69</sup>

he, by strength of fasting and praying, put to flight throngs of devils attacking him and drove them out of Ireland'). But the whole prologue to this biography develops a detailed comparison between Moses and Patrick.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, J. MacQueen, *Numerology. Theory and Outline History of a Literary Mode*, Edinburgh 1985, 19–21: 'Typologically the voyage of Brendan and his companions thus corresponds to the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness', but, according to MacQueen, the figural resposion with Lent is stronger, given the frequent occurrence of number three in the narrative context (thus a forty days fast is organized in periods of three days etc.). See above, n. 48 (a passage where the connection of saint Maedoc's fast with Moses's on Mount Sinai is associated with Jesus's fast in the desert).

<sup>67</sup> Vulg. Ex. 20: 21; 24: 17–18: '*Stetitque populus de longe, Moses autem accessit ad caliginem in qua erat Deus. [...] Erat autem species gloriae Domini quasi ignis ardens super verticem montis in conspectu filiorum Israel; ingressusque Moses medium nebulae, ascendit in montem, et fuit ibi quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus*' ('And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. [...] And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights'). This description refers to the first meeting between God and Moses on the mountain; in the narration of a second meeting, lasting again forty days and forty nights, it is specified that it was a period of strict fasting (Ex. 34: 28): '*Fecit ergo ibi cum Domino quadraginta dies et quadraginta noctes: panem non comedit et aquam non bibit*' ('And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water'). That Moses abstained from food also in the first period, might be easily understood.

<sup>68</sup> Barrind's narration (*Nav.* 1, 15–16 [35–38]): '*Ascendentibus nobis et navigantibus nebulae cooperuerunt nos undique in tantum ut vix potuissemus puppim aut proram naviculae videre.*' Conclusion of Brendan's voyage (*Nav.* 28, 3–5 [5–11] and 18 [35–38]): '*Transactis vero diebus quadraginta, vespere imminente cooperuit eos caligo grandis, ita ut vix alter alterum potuisset videre. Procurator autem ait [...]: "Ista caligo circuit illam insulam quam quaeritis per septem annos."* Post spatium vero unius horae iterum circumfulsit illos lux ingens, et navis stetit ad litus. [...] Acceptis de fructibus terrae et omnibus generibus gemmarum dimissoque benedicto procuratore et iuvene sanctus Brendanus cum suis fratribus naviculam ascendit et coepit navigare per medium caliginis' ('When the forty days were up, as the evening drew on, a great fog enveloped them, so that one of them could hardly see another. The steward, however, said [...]: "That fog encircles the island for which you have been searching for seven years." After the space of an hour a mighty light shone all around them again and the boat rested on the shore. [...] Saint Brendan with his brothers, having taken samples of the fruits of the land and of all its varieties of precious stones, took his leave of the blessed steward and the youth. He then embarked in his boat and began to sail through the middle of the fog').

<sup>69</sup> The *iuvenis* the pilgrims meet in the *Terra Repromissionis* also tells them about

When the monks/sailors touch the first island on their voyage, they have been lacking food and drink for days:<sup>70</sup>

Fratres enim vexati erant valde de fame et siti; singuli vero acceperunt vascula ut aliquid de aqua potuissent sumere. Sanctus Brendanus, cum haec vidisset, dixit: "Nolite facere: stultum est enim quod agitis, quando Deus non vult nobis ostendere portum intrandi et vultis rapinam facere. Dominus Iesus Christus post tres dies ostendet servis suis portum et locum manendi, ut reficiantur corpora vexatorum."

(The brothers were greatly harassed by the lack of food and drink. So each took up a vessel to try to catch some of the fresh water. When Saint Brendan saw this, he said: "Do not do that. What you are doing is foolish. God does not yet wish to show us a place to land, and do you want to be guilty of plundering? The Lord Jesus Christ after three days will show his servants a landing-place and a place to stay, so that our harassed bodies will be restored.")

Brendan's apparently absurd prohibition to draw water from a spring without the local authority's permission may perhaps refer to some insular usage, but more probably it derives from a passage in *Numbers* where Moses, on behalf of the people of Israel, is compelled to ask the king of Edom, *inter alia*, to be allowed to drink from his wells:<sup>71</sup>

"Obsecramus ut nobis transire liceat per terram tuam. Non ibimus per agros nec per vineas, non bibemus aquas de puteis tuis, sed gradiemur via publica, nec ad dextram nec ad sinistram declinantes, donec transeamus terminos tuos. [. . .] Per tritam gradiemur viam, et si hiberimus aquas tuas nos et pecora nostra, dabimus quod iustum est."

("Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's *high* way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. [. . .] We will go by the beaten way: and if we and our cattle drink of thy waters, we will give thee what is just.")

Brendan's warning obliges his monks to endure three further days of thirst, just as the Jews had to do in the desert through which they passed when Moses led them far from the Red Sea.<sup>72</sup>

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it (*Nav.* 28, 17 [33–4]): "*Sicut modo apparet vobis matura fructibus, ita omni tempore permanet sine ulla umbra noctis: lux enim illius est Christus*" ("Just as this land appears to you ripe with fruit, so shall it remain always without any shadow of night. For its light is Christ") (cf. 1, 25 [59–60]).

<sup>70</sup> *Nav.* 6, 8–10 [18–24].

<sup>71</sup> *Vulg.* Num. 20: 17 and 19.

<sup>72</sup> *Vulg.* Ex. 15: 22: "*Tulit autem Moses Israel de mari Rubro; et egressi sunt in desertum*

In another episode, the taste of honey the travellers experience when eating the fruit of *scaltia*, a gift by the hermits of the *Insula viro- rum fortium* (or *Insula anachoritarum*),<sup>73</sup> was possibly inspired by what is said about the manna in *Exodus*.<sup>74</sup> I dispense with describing further similarities. The analogies range from practically the beginning to the end of our text, when Brendan, after reaching the *Terra Repromissionis*, reaches a river which, as he already knows from Barrind's report,<sup>75</sup> he is not allowed to cross;<sup>76</sup> which is clearly reminiscent of how God, angry with Moses, never allowed him to pass beyond the Jordan, even if he conceded him the sight of the Promised Land from a peak,<sup>77</sup> a land where only a future generation will settle, as it will happen, many years after Brendan's death, to the monastic community of Clonfert. If the comparison holds, the half of the *Terra Repromissionis* which Brendan could not explore will be opened (*decla- rabitur*) to his successors.<sup>78</sup>

So far I have mentioned parallels 'of situation', generally little sup- ported by verbal echoes, the most convincing way to establish tex- tual influences. But verbal echoes may be found in several other passages. Suffice it to compare the words uttered against Brendan by the defeated devils ('*Recede, vir Dei, a nobis*' ('Go away, man of

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*Sur, ambulaveruntque tribus diebus per solitudinem et non inveniebant aquam*' ('So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water').

<sup>73</sup> *Nav.* 17, 31–32 [65–69]: '*Tunc praecepit vir Dei vasculum sibi afferri expremittque unam ex illis [scil. scaltis] et attulit de suo suco libram unam [. . .]. Ita per duodecim dies fratres reficiebant de singulis scaltis tenentes semper in ore saporem mellis*' ('The man of God then asked that a vessel be brought to him. He squeezed one of the fruits and got a pound of juice from it [. . .]. One fruit, therefore, fed one brother for twelve days so that he always had in his mouth the taste of honey').

<sup>74</sup> *Vulg.* Ex. 16: 31: '*Appellavitque domus Israhel nomen eius man, quod erat quasi semen coriandri album, gustusque eius quasi similiae cum melle*' ('And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers with honey').

<sup>75</sup> *Nav.* 1, 21 [49–52]: '*Euge, boni fratres! Dominus enim revelavit vobis istam terram quam daturus est suis sanctis. Est enim medietas insulae istius usque ad istud flumen. Non licet vobis transire ulterius: revertimini igitur unde existis*' ('Well done, good brothers. For the Lord has revealed to you the land, which he will give to his saints. The river there marks the middle of the island. You may not go beyond this point. So return to the place from which you departed') (words said to Barrind and Mernóc by a 'man of great luminosity' met in the Promised Land).

<sup>76</sup> *Nav.* 28, 9 [18–19]: '*Tunc sanctus Brendanus fratribus suis ait: "Istud flumen non possumus transire [. . .]"*'.

<sup>77</sup> *Vulg.* Deut. 3: 26–27; 31: 2; 32: 49–52.

<sup>78</sup> *Nav.* 28, 16 [30–1].

God, from us')) with the Pharaoh's threatening injunction to Moses (*'Recede a me, cave ne ultra videas faciem meam'* ('Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more'));<sup>79</sup> or Brendan's words of encouragement to his monks facing the sea monsters (*'Nolite expavescere, minimae fidei. [. . .] Videte, filioli, magnalia redemptoris nostri [. . .]. Modo expectate finem rei [. . .]'* ('Do not be afraid. You have little faith. [. . .] Look, my sons, at the great deeds of our Saviour! [. . .] Wait presently for the outcome of this affair [. . .]')) with the very similar exhortation to which Moses resorts when his people is about to be attacked by the army of the Pharaoh (*'Nolite timere; state et videte magnalia Domini quae facturus est hodie'* ('Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day')).<sup>80</sup>

A typical case of analogy of situation involving verbal identity may be observed in a passage where Brendan decides to climb up a rock in the ocean, the island on which the hermit Paul is waiting for him: *'Tunc sanctus Brendanus dixit fratribus suis: "Expectate hic donec revertar ad vos. Non licet vobis intrare sine licentia viri Dei qui commoratur in hoc loco"'* ('Saint Brendan then said to his brothers: "Wait here until I return to you. You may not go on land without permission from the man of God who lives in this spot"').<sup>81</sup> These words are literally taken from what Moses says to the *seniores* of Israel as he and Joshua are starting their ascent toward God on Mount Sinai: *'ascendensque Moses in montem Dei, senioribus ait: "Expectate hic donec revertamur ad vos"'* ('and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, "Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you"').<sup>82</sup> Even within an obviously realistic description, that of the first infernal island, clearly referring to a volcanic eruption,<sup>83</sup> some images may be traced back to the effect of God's descent on Mount Sinai to deliver the Law to Moses.<sup>84</sup> Yet at another moment of the

<sup>79</sup> *Nav.* 25, 23 [50]; *Vulg.* Ex. 10: 28.

<sup>80</sup> *Nav.* 16, 4 [7–8] and 9–10 [18–19]; *Vulg.* Ex. 14: 13. The phrase '*minimae fidei*' must be an echo of Matt. 8: 26 '*modicae fidei*.'

<sup>81</sup> *Nav.* 26, 11–12 [18–21].

<sup>82</sup> *Vulg.* Ex. 24: 13–14.

<sup>83</sup> *Nav.* 23, 13–14 [29–32]: '*Et simul apparuit quasi tota arsa illa insula quasi unus globus, et mare aestuabat sicut cacabus plenus carnibus aestuans quando bene ministratur ab igne. Et audiebant per totum diem ingentem ululatum ab illa insula [. . .]'* ('It looked as if the whole island was ablaze, like one big furnace, and the sea boiled, just as a cooking pot full of meat boils when it is well plied with fire. All day long they could hear a great howling from the island').

<sup>84</sup> *Vulg.* Ex. 19: 16–18: '*Et ecce coeperunt audiri tonitrua ac micare fulgura, et nubes*

same episode, the most probable model is to be found in the New Testament. Passing by the islands of Hell, Brendan urges his companions to show courage and watchfulness:<sup>85</sup>

Tunc sanctus pater suos monachos **confortabat** dicens: “O milites Christi, **roboramini in fide** non ficta et in armis spiritalibus, quia sumus in confinibus infernorum. Propterea **vigilate** et **agite viriliter**”.

(The holy father comforted his monks, saying: “Soldiers of Christ, be strengthened in faith unfeigned and in spiritual weapons, for we are in the confines of Hell. So, be on the watch and be brave.”)

It seems easy here to find the influence of Moses’s last speech to his people:<sup>86</sup> “**Viriliter agite et confortamini**; nolite timere nec paveatis” (“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid”), a passage well-known to this author; but the peroration of a Pauline epistle, certainly depending on Moses’s words, shows more elements in common with the *Navigatio*:<sup>87</sup> “**vigilate, state in fide, viriliter agite et confortamini**” (“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong”).

To sum up, his careful training in the reading and interpretation of the Scriptures provided our author, so to speak, with a lens which helped him to bring into focus various aspects of his own world, past and present. Even when he describes what he knows by direct experience, time and again it is filtered through images drawn from a multiseular tradition. The same applies to his protagonist’s adventures. I see no attempt in the *Navigatio* to draw any overall parallel between the complex of the voyage of Brendan and the life of Moses, let alone to present implicitly Moses as *figura Brendani*. Yet there must be something more substantial than occasional reminiscences, for such analogies and echoes, so to speak, follow Moses’s figure from

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*densissima operire montem; clangorque bucinæ vehementius perstrebat. [. . .] Totus autem mons Sinai fumabat [. . .] et ascendebat fumus ex eo quasi de fornace, eratque mons omnis terribilis*” (“There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly”). The smoke rising from the top of the mountain is an element of the description of the second island of Hell (*Nav.* 24, 1 [1–3]).

<sup>85</sup> *Nav.* 23, 15 [34–37].

<sup>86</sup> *Vulg.* Deut. 31: 6.

<sup>87</sup> *Vulg.* I Cor. 16: 13.

birth until death. At the outset, if it is not too far-fetched a suggestion, there is, in spite of the technical nature of such a description, a link between a particular element in the construction of Brendan's boat, *'linierunt foras omnes iuncturas pellium ex butiro'* ('they smeared all the joints of the hides on the outside with fat'),<sup>88</sup> and a feature in the episode of baby Moses kept afloat in a wicker basket (which was in a sense the structure of an Irish *currach*),<sup>89</sup> for Moses's mother *'sumpsit fiscellam scirpeam et linivit eam bitumine ac pice'* ('she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch').<sup>90</sup> And the author of the *Navigatio*, in his subtle assimilation of the biblical language, followed Moses's life through to its very last moments, because the prediction of Brendan's imminent end (*'Appropinquant enim dies peregrinationis tuae, ut dormias cum patribus tuis'* ('The final day of your pilgrimage draws near so that you may sleep with your fathers'))<sup>91</sup> puts together two phrases by which God foretells Moses's death (*'Ecce prope sunt dies mortis tuae. [. . .] Ecce tu dormies cum patribus tuis'* ("Behold, thy days approach that thou must die. [. . .] Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers"))<sup>92</sup>.

This is, in my opinion, a decisive clue. At this final moment, the two characters almost fully overlap: Brendan, like Moses, will soon sleep beside his ancestors after fulfilling a mission fundamental for his people's future. Moreover, if it is historically correct to cast a glance at the context of the biblical model, God's prediction of Moses's death is followed by a fearful prophecy, where the people of Israel become prey to all sorts of evils and pains<sup>93</sup>—a prediction confirmed later by Moses himself,<sup>94</sup> who refers to disgraces ensuing

<sup>88</sup> *Nav.* 4, 4 [9–10].

<sup>89</sup> Cf. J. Hornell, 'The Currachs of Ireland', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 23 (1937), 74–83, 148–75; 24 (1938), 5–39.

<sup>90</sup> *Vulg.* Ex. 2: 3. Another element of the description (*Nav.* 4, 3 [8–9]), the fact that the boat was covered *'coriis bovinis atque rubricatis in cortice roborino'* ('with ox-hides tanned with the bark of oak'), may owe something to one of God's prescriptions to Moses in Ex. 25: 3–5: *'accipere debetis [. . .] pelles arietum rubricatas [. . .]'* ("ye shall take rams' skins dyed red").

<sup>91</sup> *Nav.* 28, 15 [29–30].

<sup>92</sup> *Vulg.* Deut. 31: 14–16.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*: *'et populus iste consurgens fornicabitur post deos alienos'* ('and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers') etc.

<sup>94</sup> *Vulg.* Deut. 31: 29 [Moses to Israel]: *'Novi enim quod post mortem meam inique agetis [. . .] et occurrent vobis mala in extremo tempore [. . .]'* ("For I know that after my

*'in extremo tempore'*. This provided the eschatological context—whether or not it is connected to the Viking threat—within which the community of Clonfert, *'in novissimo tempore'*,<sup>95</sup> would set sail again to take refuge beyond the fog in the Promised Land.

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death ye will utterly corrupt *yourselves* [...] and evil will befall you in the latter days [...]"').

<sup>95</sup> Cf. above (n. 39).



## THE ABBOT AND THE MONASTIC COMMUNITY IN THE GAELIC CHURCHES, 550 TO 800

Hérolf Pettiau

The image of the abbot is very strong in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*. The authority, charisma and solicitude displayed by Brendan, as well as by other leaders such as abbots Barrind and Ailbe, towards their subordinates are evident on every page.<sup>1</sup> So it is fitting to review here the case of abbots in the Gaelic Churches of the earlier Middle Ages. These Churches were characterised by a plurality of organisation, as has been brought to light by current research.<sup>2</sup> The geographical area considered goes beyond Ireland and includes parts of Northern Britain—namely the church founded on Iona by Saint Columba.<sup>3</sup> The period of roughly two and a half centuries covered by this chapter constitutes a formative period for Gaelic Christendom. Its chronological limits are, on the one hand, the middle of the sixth century, at which time we witness a notable enthusiasm for ascetic life in the British Isles, which is particularly well documented by the life and career of Saint Columbanus, abbot of Luxeuil and Bobbio. Indeed, his figure has rightly or wrongly been generally considered as emblematic of Gaelic monasticism. On the other hand, the beginning of the ninth century was marked by the beginning of incursions by

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<sup>1</sup> *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatris from Early Latin Manuscripts*, ed. C. Selmer, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959, repr. Blackrock (Co. Dublin) 1989. Translation by John J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan. Journey to the Promised Land*, Gerrards Cross 1991 (1st ed. Mountrath (Portlaoise) 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, London 1966, remains essential reading although it is somewhat dated on Gaelic ecclesiastical history. See the more recent contributions by Richard Sharpe, 'Some Problems concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 230–70, and 'Churches and Communities in Early Medieval Ireland. Towards a Pastoral Model', *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe, Leicester 1992, 81–109, as well as Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000*, Maynooth 1999. For archaeological evidence in Ireland, see Nancy Edwards, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*, London 1990, 99–131. For Scotland, see Raymond G. Lamb, 'Coastal Settlements of the North', *Scottish Archaeological Forum*, 5 (1973), 76–98.

<sup>3</sup> See Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry. The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*, Oxford 1988.

Scandinavian seamen which produced real, although sometimes temporary, disruptions within the ecclesiastical life of the Gaelic regions. This time was also marked by an upsurge of interest in ascetic rigour within certain communities among groups of religious named the Céli Dé ('servants' or 'clients' of God).<sup>4</sup> It is also roughly the time of the redaction of the *Navigatio*, discussed in the present volume.<sup>5</sup> The study of abbacy in Gaelic countries during this rather long period has been somewhat neglected, even though several aspects of the organisation of Gaelic churches have been hotly debated in the last twenty years. I am thinking particularly of the revaluation of the importance of the bishop's role and of diocesan organisation at the expense of the monastic element as a result of the work of Richard Sharpe and Colmán Etchingham. The abbatial function is at the centre of a debate which is far from over.<sup>6</sup> Finally, as far as the office of abbess is concerned, I refer the reader to the very useful analysis provided by Christina Harrington in her recent monograph on female monasticism in Ireland.<sup>7</sup>

I shall attempt in this contribution to highlight three facets of the abbatial office which are directly linked to the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*. First, the exercise of authority poses several problems, within and outside the community. Then, I shall evoke two dimensions of the abbot's role within his community, that is as director and organiser of the material and spiritual life of a group of people who have accepted his rule as a way of life and his person as chief. I shall thus discuss his role in the liturgical organisation of the community and his role in the food-provision of the community.

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<sup>4</sup> On the relationships between Gaelic and Scandinavian peoples, see *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn, Dublin 1998. See also C. Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Church Settlements in the Ninth Century. A Reconsideration of the Annals*, Maynooth 1996.

<sup>5</sup> On the beginnings of monasticism in Gaelic countries, see David N. Dumville, 'The Origins and Early History of Insular Monasticism. Aspects of Literature, Christianity, and Society in Britain and Ireland, A.D. 400–600', *Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies, Kansai University*, 30 (1997), 85–107. On the Céli Dé, see Hughes, *The Church*, 173–93, as well as Peter O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé. Spiritual Reform in Ireland 750–900*, 2nd ed., Dublin 1981. More generally on the period under study, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, Cambridge 2000. On the dating of the text, see David N. Dumville, 'Two Approaches to the Dating of "Nauigatio Sancti Brendani"', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd series 29 (1988), 87–102.

<sup>6</sup> See the references indicated above, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church. Ireland 450–1150*, Oxford 2002. See in particular pp. 166–88.

This study will be based on contemporary sources (i.e. written between c. 550 and c. 800), mostly from the Gaelic regions, most often written in Latin, but in some cases in the vernacular. I shall not mention sources relating to Gaelic clerics active on the Continent such as Fursa of Péronne. One exception, however, is Saint Columbanus. His writings constitute precious witnesses to the views expressed by a Gaelic abbot on his office, even though some of them have been interpolated to some extent by his successors.<sup>8</sup>

I shall use two types of sources: normative texts and hagiographic narratives. Normative texts include rules and penitentials designed to regulate the life of Christian communities, as well as conciliar and canonical literature. These are ecclesiastical texts which, besides their normative, educational or commemorative function, represent human relationships within religious communities. These sources will thus be used together to throw some light on important dimensions of the monastic ideology within the Gaelic churches.<sup>9</sup>

### 1. *General questions of monastic discipline*

Throughout the journey, Brendan's authority over his band of monks is absolute. Abbatial authority is a complex subject, and not only within the Gaelic churches. Within the Gaelic world, the subject has been dominated by terminological questions occasionally to the point of obscuring the debate.<sup>10</sup> Let us recall, however, the importance of the meaning of the word *princeps*, which, often applied to the abbot,

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<sup>8</sup> Columbanus wrote two monastic rules later interpolated. See T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus', in: *Columbanus. Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. M. Lapidge, Woodbridge 1997, 217–39. His *Vita*, written by Jonas of Bobbio, must be considered for what it is, namely a text written about twenty-five years after the saint's death and aimed at a monastic community, which presented remarkable continuities with the Columbanian writings. See Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 63–80, and Clare Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', in: *Studies in Irish Hagiography. Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, Dublin 2001, 189–220.

<sup>9</sup> On early Irish hagiography, see Nathalie Stalmans, *La sainteté dans l'Irlande médiévale. Analyse critique des sources hagiographiques (VII<sup>e</sup>–IX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rennes 2003.

<sup>10</sup> I am thinking here of the problems of interpretation of *paruchia*, the Hiberno-Latin spelling of *parochia*, which has been and still is the object of stormy and perhaps sterile debates. See Ailbhe Séamus Mac Shamhráin, *Church and Polity in Pre-Norman Ireland. The Case of Glendalough*, Maynooth 1996, 168–215, or the recent speculations on the term by Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, chapters 4 and 5, *passim*.

denotes a very important level of authority, as argued by Wendy Davies.<sup>11</sup> It is true that the complex terminology relating to the offices existing in the Gaelic churches poses a number of largely unanswered questions about the exercise of authority in churches.

In order to evaluate the role of the abbot as a legislator of his community the most logical approach is the analysis of monastic rules, particularly those written by or attributed to abbots. For the beginning of the period, we have the two rules written by Columbanus; for the end, the documents linked to Mael Ruain of Tallaght and to various communities of Céli Dé.<sup>12</sup> Other rules, such as those attributed to Saint Ailbe of Emly and to Saint Mochutu/Fothad, also known as Carthach, are less securely dated.<sup>13</sup> The latter is also a text linked to the Céli Dé. We shall start with some letters of Columbanus since they allow us to contextualise the monastic rules of the saint.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that in the second half of the sixth century the British Isles witnessed a wave of enthusiasm for monastic asceticism, and that it caused disciplinary problems for the abbots of the time.<sup>15</sup> Columbanus echoes the situation at the end of the letter written

<sup>11</sup> Wendy Davies, 'Clerics as Rulers. Some Implications of the Terminology of Ecclesiastical Authority in Early Medieval Ireland', in: *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. N. Brooks, Leicester 1982, 81–97. See also Jean-Michel Picard, 'Princeps and Principatus in the Early Irish Church. A Reassessment', in: *Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth, Dublin 2000, 146–60.

<sup>12</sup> Colombanus, *Regula Monachorum* and *Regula Coenobialis*, to which one should add the *Paenitentiale* ed. and transl. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, Dublin 1957 (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 2), 122–43 and 142–81. Among the texts linked to the Céli Dé, one known as *The Monastery of Tallaght*, ed. and transl. E. J. Gwynn and W. J. Purton, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 29C (1911–12), 115–79; stands out. See also the 'Teachings of Mael Ruain' (*Teagasg Maoil Ruain*), ed. and transl. Edward Gwynn, *The Rule of Tallaght*, Dublin 1927, 2–63 (Hermathena, 44, second supplemental vol.); as well as The 'Rule of the Céli Dé' (*Riagail na Céle nDé*), ed. and transl. Gwynn, *ibid.*, 64–87, which has been attributed to Mael Ruain. I shall make greater use of *The Monastery of Tallaght*, the most revealing text, written before 841.

<sup>13</sup> *Regula s. Carthagi*, ed. and transl. Mac Eclaise, 'The Rule of Saint Carthage', *Irish Ecclesiastical Review*, 4th series 27 (1910), 495–517.

<sup>14</sup> Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 1–59. The translation is that of R. Stenton, 'Columbanus, *Letter I*. Translation and Commentary', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 3 (1993), 149–68, at p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> See Dumville, 'The Origins', as well as by the same author, *St David of Wales*, Cambridge 2001 (Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lectures on Mediaeval Welsh History, 1), 5–26, particularly on the memory of Saint David, an important sixth-century personality and promoter of a particularly rigorous asceticism.

around 600 to Gregory the Great, when he confides to the pope in these terms:<sup>16</sup>

Answer this third question, I ask, if it is not bothersome: what should be done about those monks who, going against their vows for the sake of God and inflamed by the desire for a more perfect life, abandon the places of their first devotion, and against their abbots' wills, driven by monastic fervour, either relapse or flee into the deserts? The author Uinniau asked Gildas about these things, and he wrote back most elegantly; but nevertheless anxiety always increases through the zeal for learning.

Columbanus seems to be referring first and foremost to aspiring ascetics wishing to have their life governed by a more rigorous rule than their current one. We should also notice in that context that a canon, attributed to Gildas and quoted in the *Hibernensis*, forbids an abbot promoting a more rigorous rule to admit a monk coming from a community where the rule is less stringent, and, on the contrary, that an abbot with a more relaxed rule cannot retain a monk seeking more rigour.<sup>17</sup>

That problem of the respect for authority and management of the community lies at the heart of the letter sent by the saint just before he was sent into exile in Ireland on the order of Queen Brunhild. In this context of exile, one can feel a very strong bond between the abbot and his community.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Columbanus appears to be very personal, and this letter constitutes a real meditation on the office of abbot, in which one can somehow sense a Gregorian influence.<sup>19</sup> Columbanus suggests that his monks should follow Attala, whom he sees as the most knowledgeable leader in respect of the perils of the soul menacing the monks. However, if the latter will not do so, they should choose Waldelenus, who is also able to play the same role in a satisfactory manner, with the help of the divine will. Columbanus insists on the unity of the community on the basis of Matthew 18:19. He finally gives more specific advice to Attala about the behaviour to adopt. He insists on the importance of the

<sup>16</sup> Columbanus, *Epistula* 1, § 7, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 8–9.

<sup>17</sup> *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, XXXIX, § 6, ed. Hermann Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, 150.

<sup>18</sup> Columbanus, *Epistula* 4, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 26–37.

<sup>19</sup> We know that the Irishman knew of Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* as he mentions it himself in his first letter, *Epistula* 1, § 9, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 10–11.

monks' instruction, but also on his own. In a very Gregorian manner, he adds comments on the necessary adaptation of the abbot to the variety of temperaments he may face. Furthermore, Attala should even fear the love of his followers, which may obscure his judgement. Columbanus also mentions divergences shown by some concerning the level of rigour of the rule, and he gives Attala pragmatic advice in order to preserve the unity of the faithful. When dealing with the personal morality of the superior, Columbanus makes explicit references to Gregory the Great and insists on humility. The call to unity is, as we can see, a *leitmotiv*, probably motivated by the difficult context faced by the community. We should note in passing that Adomnán attributes similar preoccupations to Columba of Iona on his deathbed. He too urges his monks to unity and *caritas*.<sup>20</sup> The permanency of the abbot's leadership constitutes another element common to the two saints. In the letter addressed to his community, Columbanus seems to have conceived of his office as permanent, independently of what may have happened to him, and that his successor should 'only' be a prior, even if *de facto* he exerts the abbatial function. A similar conception seems to have prevailed in the Church of Iona. Indeed, even in exile, the abbot remained in title the chief of the community.<sup>21</sup> Among the officers of his Church mentioned in the text several have the titles of *praepositus* or *ministrator*, but none is given that of abbot.<sup>22</sup>

That problem of transfer of authority was a reality for at least one Columbanian community, according to Jonas of Bobbio who starts the second book of his *Vita* of Columbanus and his disciples with a depiction of the difficulties encountered by Attala, his successor in ensuring respect for the founder's rule.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbani*, III, § 24, ed. A. O. Anderson and M. O. Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1991, 224: *Haec uobis o filioli nouissima commendo uerba, ut inter uos motuam et non fictam habeatis caritatem cum pace.*

<sup>21</sup> On the government of the Church of Iona by Columba, see Herbert, *Iona*, 33–35; R. Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona. Life of St Columba*, Harmondsworth 1995, 43–53; David Dumville, 'Derry, Iona, England, and the Governance of the Columban Church', in: *Derry and Londonderry—History & Society. Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, ed. Gerard O'Brien, Dublin 1999, 91–114.

<sup>22</sup> Hughes, *The Church*, 63, referring to Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae*, I. 31 and 45, ed. Anderson and Anderson, pp. 58 and 82. Discussion by Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 244–64, particularly 256–57, and Dumville, 'Derry, Iona, England', particularly p. 107.

<sup>23</sup> Jonas, *Vitae Sancti Columbani Discipulorumque eius*, II. § 1, ed. B. Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, Hannover 1905 (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum*), 144–294 (230–32).

The *Hibernensis*, the Irish collection of canons, dateable from the beginning of the eighth century, contains few articles specifically devoted to monastic matters. These articles are mostly concentrated in Book 39. The first three chapters of that Book define the monastic institution, enumerating the different typologies of monks as they were established by patristic authorities: Isidore of Seville, John Cassian and Jerome.<sup>24</sup> From that juxtaposition of 'imported' authorities comes a strong impression, which dominates the rest of the canons, of an enhancement of communal cenobitism under the rule of an abbot, and the rejection of most non-supervised forms of contemplative life. Indeed, most of these canons are devoted to questions relating to monastic wanderings (journeys made by monks from one community to another, from one abbot to another), as well as to the problems these wanderings can cause.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the *Hibernensis* quotes a canon of the council held at Agde in 506, in which it was laid down that an abbot was able to allow a monk to live as a hermit, after experiencing communal life.<sup>26</sup> Like Columbanus, the *Hibernensis* several times refers to Gildas's authority.<sup>27</sup> To this authority he adds that (probably apocryphal) of Patrick, namely the two synods attached to the name of the saint. The presence of Insular sources in dealing with such questions alongside continental sources of authority is quite interesting, since these issues appear to have arisen on several occasions in the Gaelic churches.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, this particular problem of a change of community is at the heart of one of the claims expressed in a passage from the *Liber*

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<sup>24</sup> *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, XXXIX, §§ 1–3, ed. H. Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1885, 147–49. Monastic matters are also discussed in Book XXXVII entitled *De Principatu*, ed. Wasserschleben, *ibid.*, 131–41.

<sup>25</sup> On the sixteen rubrics in which are organised the themes developed in Book XXXIX, only a few deal with different subjects. So the property of goods by monks is discussed in rubric five, or interdiction made to monks to have children in rubric fourteen, or the interdiction made to build a *cella* without the agreement of the abbot.

<sup>26</sup> *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, XXXIX, § 15, ed. Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, 152.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, XXXIX, §§ 5, 6, 7, and 9, ed. Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, 150–51.

<sup>28</sup> So Nicaea is quoted in XXXIX, § 10, about the forbidding of an abbot to welcome a monk belonging to another abbot; the Council of Chalcedon in XXXIX, § 13, on the prohibition of a monk to be inscribed in two churches, as well as in XXXIX, § 16, the council of Orléans forbidding monks to leave their monastery without the abbot's agreement. A 'Synodus Alexandrina' quoted in XXXIX, § 14, about monks having children, has not yet, to my knowledge, been identified.



*Angeli*, a propagandist tract in favour of the Church of Armagh, dating probably from the seventh century. This text, probably composite in origin, was aimed at establishing the authority of the bishop of Armagh over the ecclesiastical settlements of Ireland. In this passage it is stipulated that any monk from Ireland wishing to place himself under the protection of Saint Patrick could do so, even without his own abbot's permission:<sup>29</sup>

Equally, we must know that every monk, belonging to any church, would not renounce his own monastic vows if he returned to Patrick, particularly if he had given up his vows with his own previous abbot's consent. Thus, equally, it is not permitted either to blame or to excommunicate whoever would reach his Church for his [Patrick's] love, since he himself will judge all the Irish in the mighty day of the terrible judgement in Christ's presence.

If we turn to sources linked to the community of *Céli Dé* at Tallaght, namely, the *Monastery of Tallaght*, as well as the *Teachings of Mael Ruain* and the *Rule of the Céli Dé*, we find some trace of questions relating to monks travelling to another community. An edifying story is recorded concerning the case of an anchorite coming from the community of Slane. He was committed to strict abstinence, to the point that he used to distribute to the poor food given to him. He wished to test Mael Ruain and came to his community. He was, however, rebuked by the saint, who despised his strict regime, as it did not enable him to work like the other monks of Mael Ruain's community (whose food, although rationed, enabled them to work).<sup>30</sup> Likewise, a negative view is given of a travelling monk who, having had intercourse with a woman, asked for penitence from several abbots who had found it unnecessary, before being sentenced to fifteen years of penance by Columba of Iona.<sup>31</sup> The motive for the discontent expressed by the saint, as stated in the *Vita*, was the lack of respect for several holy men, but it is plausible that the issue of the monks' travels may not have been far from his mind.

<sup>29</sup> *Liber Angeli*, §§ 22 and 23, ed. and transl. Ludwig Bieler, *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, Dublin 1979 (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 10), pp. 188–89: *Item, scire debemus: omnis monachus uniuscuiusque aecllessiae, si ad Patricium reuerterit, non denegat proprium monachi uotum, maxime si ex consensu abbatis sui prioris deuouerit. Itaque non uituperandus neque excommunicandus quicumque ad aecllessiam eius perrexerit caussa amoris illius, quia ipse iudicabit omnes Hibernenses in die magno terribilis iudicii in praesentia Christi.*

<sup>30</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 77, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 159–60.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, § 67, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 154–55.



Hagiographic sources can, in principle, provide precious information, particularly when the place of composition can be identifiable as a monastic environment, and when the *Vita* is that of an abbot. Although these conditions are rarely met, they are in the case of Adomnán's *Vita S. Columbae*, and also apparently in the case the *Vita* of Saint Cainnech, some episodes of which are placed in a monastic context.<sup>32</sup> However, in most cases, *Lives* offer little information on this matter.

One last point should be made: the counterweights to an over-rigorous exercise of the abbatial function. Three types of example can be thought of, of which episcopal jurisdiction seems to be the most logical. Then comes the influence of the community, which can play a moderating role. Finally, the influence of other abbots should be taken into account, especially within synods, which Gaelic abbots attended in a more developed manner than on the Continent.<sup>33</sup>

Relationships between bishops, abbots and monastic communities are an important aspect of the Church's social history in the early Middle Ages. Again, the case of Columbanus is very instructive. We know, through his correspondence, of the disputes he had with members of the Frankish episcopate. From his *Vita*, we also get hints of the influence exerted by the Irishman on several members of the aristocracy in Neustria, Austrasia and Burgundy as well as on some Frankish bishops who were to play an important role in favouring the extension of a certain form of monastic autonomy.<sup>34</sup> This is also

<sup>32</sup> *Vita S. Caimnechi* § 26, ed. W. W. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi*, Brussels 1965 (Subsidia Hagiographica, 28), p. 26, is revealing about the extreme exigency requested from a layman by Columba. Cainnech finds the exigency far too exaggerated and reprimands Columba for this unjustified severity. Máire Herbert argues that the political and ecclesiastical situation prevailing in the O'Neill territories between 766 and 780 provide a credible context for the writing of this *vita* in her essay 'The *Vita Columbae* and Irish Hagiography. A Study of *Vita Caimnechi*', in: *Studies in Irish Hagiography. Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, Dublin 2001, 31–40.

<sup>33</sup> Discussion by Charles-Edwards *Early Christian Ireland*, 275–81. *Cáin Adomnáin*, ed. and transl. P. O'Neill and D. N. Dumville, *Cáin Adomnáin and Canones Adomnani*, 2 vols., Cambridge 2003 (Basic Texts for Gaelic History, 2), promulgated in 697 at the synod of Birr, is particularly eloquent. The guarantor list includes a number of abbots who signed themselves as head of their church. See on that list Máirín Ni Dhonnchadha, 'The Guarantor List of *Cáin Adomnáin* 697', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 178–215.

<sup>34</sup> See lastly Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space. Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe*, Manchester 1999, 59–73 (on Columbanus's direct impact), and 74–96 (on the further developments during the Merovingian period).

the case of his successor at Bobbio, Bertulf, who obtained from Pope Honorius I an exemption for that monastery from the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop.<sup>35</sup> As far as the Gaelic churches are concerned, the particular case of the Columbanian church has been taken as a model of Gaelic conceptions of the relationship between bishops and abbots. The question is rather difficult to assess on the basis of extant sources.

The *Hibernensis* does not contain any provision concerning relationships between abbots and bishops in Book 39 devoted to monastic affairs. This is in contrast with Gallic councils of the sixth and seventh centuries, which insisted upon episcopal supervision in disciplinary matters, as well as sacramental ones such as the blessing of new altars, and also patrimonial ones. An abbot could be requested, in some cases, to keep accounts and to submit them to the control of his bishop.<sup>36</sup> The 'Second Synod of Saint Patrick' does stipulate that monks have to be under the authority of a bishop *or* of an abbot, but there is no clear mark of episcopal authority over the abbatial institution, contrary to what happened in continental councils and synods.<sup>37</sup> We are thus faced with a 'grey zone' as regards the organisation of Gaelic Churches. We should notice, however, a passage from the *Liber Angeli* which includes in the definition of the prerogatives of the bishop of Armagh the payment of a tax by all the ecclesiastical establishments of the island as well as a clause concerning the subjection of all monks to the authority of the bishop.<sup>38</sup> It is evident that this was a highly propagandist text, promoting the interests of a particular church, and the level of credit this text may have enjoyed outside Armagh circles remains unclear. However, the fact that this claim exists ought to be taken into account.

Elements of information concerning episcopal jurisdiction can be deduced from the reading of a law-text in Old Irish, *Riagail Phátraic* ('Rule of Patrick'). Even though it has been abundantly quoted in

<sup>35</sup> Jonas, *Vitae Sancti Columbani Discipulorumque eius*, II, § 23, ed. Krusch, *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum*, 281–83.

<sup>36</sup> On the power of correction and coercion of the bishop regarding the abbot, see Orléans (511), c. 7 or Orléans (533), c. 21, ed. C. de Clercq, *Concilia Galliae A. 511–A. 695*, Turnhout 1963, respectively pp. 7 and 102, or the diocesan synod of Auxerre (561–605) which also deals with monastic matters, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Synodus II S. Patricii*, § 17, ed. and transl. L. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, Dublin 1963 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 5), 184–96, here 190: *Monachi sunt qui solitariae sine terrenis opibus habitant sub potestate episcopi uel abbatis.*

<sup>38</sup> *Liber Angeli*, § 13, ed. Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, p. 186.

recent contributions, its dating still remains uncertain, but linguistically it seems to belong to the eighth or ninth centuries.<sup>39</sup> This is a source of major importance since it deals with the relationships between bishops, celebrants and the laity, fixing in a contractual way the remuneration of the celebrant, and placing the bishop at the centre of pastoral care, a dimension of ecclesiastical organisation which is difficult to apprehend from most other texts. Here too, however, relationships with abbots are not clearly specified. The abbot is mentioned explicitly only once, as the person responsible for the penance of a monk who has contravened his vow of celibacy by having sexual intercourse with a nun.<sup>40</sup> Several times, one finds a mention of the office of *airchinnech*, translatable as chief, i.e. superior of a community, generally equated with the Latin *princeps*.<sup>41</sup> In some circumstances this latter function can be exerted by an abbot.<sup>42</sup> In *Riagail Phátraic*, the *airchinnech* is in a relation of superiority with the *manaig*, an ambiguous term which can be translated either by 'monk' in the classical sense of the term, or by 'tenant of an ecclesiastical property'. The *airchinnech* is responsible for the administration of pastoral care in the communities under his control. We touch here on the questions of terminology evoked at the beginning of this article.

On the basis of his analysis of a series of *obits* of ecclesiastics contained in the Gaelic chronicles as well as on legal sources, Thomas Charles-Edwards has suggested that different sources of authority could coexist within the Gaelic Churches. Namely, bishops, sanctified by the unction, alongside abbots—and more generally heads of churches, but also anchorites or scholars (*scribae*), who owed their prestige to their asceticism or to their knowledge of ecclesiastical matters. All could take part in synods, which gained thereby a higher

<sup>39</sup> *Riagail Phátraic*, ed. and transl. J. G. O'Keeffe, 'The Rule of Patrick', *Ériu*, 1 (1904), 216–24. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 258 and n. 95. Etchingham has referred to this text on many occasions in his *Church Organisation*, *passim*. See also Sharpe, 'Some Problems', 252–53 and n. 6, who has dated it to the eighth century. We should note, with Sharpe, that the *Rule of the Céli Dé* contains (at §§ 57–60) an abridged version of *Riagail Phátraic*. This text still deserves thorough study.

<sup>40</sup> *Riagail Phátraic*, § 4, ed. O'Keeffe, 'The Rule of Patrick', 221–22.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, §§ 5, 7, 9, ed. O'Keeffe, 'The Rule of Patrick', 220–21.

<sup>42</sup> I refer the reader to my study 'The Officials of the Church of Armagh in the Early and Central Middle Ages, to A.D. 1200', in: *Armagh—History and Society*, ed. A. J. Hughes and William Nolan, Dublin 2001, 121–86 particularly at pp. 131–32, on questions relating to these terms.

level of representativeness than the continental assemblies.<sup>43</sup> One rare passage from the 'Monastery of Tallaght', in which episcopal authority is mentioned, confirms this conception quite well. It asserts the authority of the abbot by limiting the extent to which bishops and elders (*sruithi*) are allowed to grant exemptions from vigils.<sup>44</sup>

Sources relating to the community of Kildare depict a particular case of organisation. Indeed, Cogitosus provides in the preface and in the concluding passages of his *Vita S. Brigidae* an extraordinary depiction of a community which encompasses monks, clerics and the general population. This specific organisation is ordered on the basis of gender, inaugurated according to the hagiographer by the female founder who needed an ordained priest in order to provide her community with the necessary liturgical provisions. This division between a *dominatrix* and an *archiepiscopus episcoporum* was still in effect in the seventh century according to Cogitosus.<sup>45</sup> In a similar way the anonymous Life of Brigit shows her on several occasions in the company of bishops, including Saint Patrick.<sup>46</sup> Finally, one should keep in mind this passage in Adomnán's *Vita S. Columbae* in which the holy abbot recognises and honours a bishop who came to visit him in disguise.<sup>47</sup> In a famous passage of his *Historia ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, finished at the monastery of Jarrow in 731, the Anglo-Saxon monk Bede described the organisation of the community of Iona in the past, underlining its atypical character, which dates back to the founder's personality.<sup>48</sup> The communities of Kildare and Iona provide two specific examples of differing organisations of important Gaelic churches

<sup>43</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 271–81.

<sup>44</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §15, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 132–33.

<sup>45</sup> Cogitosus, *Vita Sanctae Brigidae*, prologue, ed. J. Bolland *et al.*, *Acta Sanctorum*, Feb., I, Antwerp 1658, 135, and § 8, *ibid.*, 141. On the terminology of power relating to abbesses, see Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church*, 171–73.

<sup>46</sup> Some cases: *Vita I<sup>a</sup> Sanctae Brigidae*, § 16 (B. receives the veil from Bishop Mel), § 36 (B. meets Patrick in an assembly of bishops), § 37 (P. orders B. never to travel without a priest), § 40 (in the monastery of Saint Laisre, B. makes food appear for her followers, those of Patrick, as well as for the members of the community), § 68 (B. travels to Munster in order to meet Bishop Erc, Patrick's disciple), ed. Bolland, *Acta Sanctorum*, Feb., I, pp. 120, 122–23, 128.

<sup>47</sup> Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae*, I, § 44, ed. Anderson and Anderson, 80. Another passage revealing the importance given by the saint to episcopal functions: III, § 6, *ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>48</sup> Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, III, § 4, ed. and transl. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford 1969, 222–24. See discussions by Sharpe, 'Some Problems', and by Dumville, 'Derry, Iona, England', pp. 93–94.

in the seventh century. Nonetheless, it is far from proved that they are fully representative of other Gaelic churches and communities—male or female—between the sixth and the ninth century. A common point deserves to be highlighted, however. In both cases, the justification for the contemporary organisation of the community is expressly linked to the founder's personality.

The corpus contains very little information on the way a community could react to an abbot considered to have too heavy a hand. The 'Monastery of Tallaght' contains one injunction reportedly made by Mael Ruain concerning the case of an abbot who had shown anger toward other people. Such an abbot is requested to seek pardon for the offence from a stranger or from one of his own monks if he is particularly virtuous.<sup>49</sup> However, if the other person is a mere servant, then no public display of contrition is needed, since it could destroy the authority of the abbot toward the servant. Penance and fasting must rather be self-imposed.<sup>50</sup>

## 2. *The abbot as organiser of the liturgical life of the community*

The reading of sixth-century continental monastic rules, such as that of the Master or that of Saint Benedict, is unequivocal concerning the importance of the role played by abbots in the organising of worship within their community.<sup>51</sup> This is also the case with the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, a text clearly punctuated by the liturgical calendar and by the singing of psalms.<sup>52</sup> It is, as O'Loughlin has described it, a complex allegorical text in which liturgy is understood at several levels, heavenly and human.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 36, ed. Gwynn and Purton, pp. 141–42.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* § 37, 142.

<sup>51</sup> See Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Travail et alimentation dans les règles de St Benoît et du Maître', *Revue Bénédictine*, 74 (1964), 242–51.

<sup>52</sup> Cynthia Bourgeault, 'The Monastic Archetype in the *Navigatio* of St Brendan', *Monastic Studies*, 14 (1983), 109–22, particularly 114 and 118: 'The Divine Office, it seems, is the universal language of the *Navigatio*. On the Island of Smiths the group is informed, by a bird's voice, interpreted by the abbot, that their travel will last for several years and shall be punctuated by stops on the liturgical feast of Maundy Thursday, Vigil of Easter, Easter Day, and Christmas Day at the same places: *Navigatio*, § 11, ed. Selmer, *Navigatio*, 28. Liturgical dimensions exist in the episodes set on the Island of Sheep, the Paradise of Birds, the Community of Ailbe, the Island of the Three Choirs.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Distant Islands', p. 6. See also Pádraig O'Neill, 'Welsh *anterth*, Old Irish *antairt*', *Ériu*, 41 (1990), 1–11, at pp. 5–7.

Saint Columbanus left two rules: *Regula monachorum* and *Regula coenobialis*, which complement each other and were destined to regulate the life of his continental foundations. The first can be considered as a treatise on personal morals, addressed to the individual, the second is more on the level of a penitential. According to Jane Stevenson, Columbanus does not seem to have been inspired by contemporary rules, as the Northumbrian Benedict Biscop later was for his foundations of Wearmouth and Jarrow. Rather the Irishman should have found his inspiration in the writings of John Cassian.<sup>54</sup>

Columbanus's *Regula monachorum* opens with a passage dealing with obedience, and several times the saint mentions the authority of his *senioribus*, which can be translated as 'predecessors, ancients'.<sup>55</sup> Such an authority constitutes a *leitmotiv* in the saint's letters in the context of the controversies in which the saint was involved. Columbanus also insists on the unity and the necessary discipline resulting from the agreement between monks,<sup>56</sup> and he attributes great importance to *discretio* ('discernment, prudence'), the lack of which virtue caused the fall of several monks.<sup>57</sup> If the *Regula monachorum* has a strong moral dimension, it also regulates, in a practical manner, aspects of conventual life, most importantly the singing of psalms.<sup>58</sup> This constitutes one important dimension of monastic legislation related to Mael Ruain, as we shall see. *Regula coenobialis* develops several themes, including the obligation of frequent confessions,<sup>59</sup> behaviour in or around the refectory (which will be discussed in the next section) as well as the policing of behaviour during the office.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jane Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', in: *Columbanus. Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. Michael Lapidge, Woodbridge 1997, 203–16. Jane Stevenson has found a series of points in common between the prayers of intercession and the order of the psalms in Columbanian writings and in the Bangor Antiphonary which dates from the end of the seventh century. Pádraig O'Neill, 'Welsh *anterth*', finds liturgical influence from John Cassian in the *Navigatio*.

<sup>55</sup> Columbanus, *Regula monachorum*, § 7, ed. Walker, 128.

<sup>56</sup> This aspect is frequent in Columbanus's thought. See in *Regula Monachorum*, §§ 1 (on obedience), 7 (on the chant of the office), 9 (the fight against pride in a passage on mortification), ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 122–23, 128–33, 138–41.

<sup>57</sup> Columbanus, *Regula monachorum*, § 8, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 134–38.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, § 7, ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 128–32.

<sup>59</sup> Columbanus, *Regula coenobialis*, § 1 (confessions), ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 144–45.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, §§ 4 (correction of those who do not sing the psalms correctly because of cold), 9 (prayers and genuflexions during offices), 14 (late arrival to prayers), 15 (question related to the loss of the host), ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 148–49, 158–59, 162–63.

In the second collection of monastic rules under discussion, those linked to the *Céli Dé*, the abbot's role in the ordering of liturgical life also appears to be crucial. Indeed, the most important of these texts, the 'Monastery of Tallaght', is replete with details of the different preferences of religious leaders in liturgical, devotional matters, as well as in matters dealing with the community's diet. From the reading of the text, it appears that there was clearly a variety of opinions expressed about liturgical preferences on the part of abbots like Mael Ruain, as well as his disciple Mael Díthruib, or others such as Helair, whose practice was different from that of Mael Ruain and was borrowed by another abbot, Dublithir.<sup>61</sup> Mael Díthruib was acting differently: among other things, he used to add an extra two psalms to the singing of litanies to the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael and the saint celebrated that day.<sup>62</sup> Mael Ruain himself also used to sing hymns and invocations, also to the Virgin Mary and Saint Michael.<sup>63</sup> Not surprisingly, the psalms, and particularly the *Beati*, took on real importance.<sup>64</sup> In the 'Teachings of Maél Ruain' we find another interesting case: that of an *erenagh* (or *airchinnech*), named Muirchertach mac Olcobhair, who had decided that his monks should sing the *Beati* twelve times in association with the *Magnificat* rather than the Psalter for a very practical reason: most of these monks knew by heart only that psalm.<sup>65</sup>

Of course, such responsibilities led the abbot to play an educational role within his community. This role also appears among the abbot's responsibilities in the Rule of Saint Carthage as well as in the letter sent to his monks by Columbanus.<sup>66</sup> Saint Columba of Iona is, however, a particularly telling case. This saint was commemorated shortly after his death as a scholar, a highly skilled expositor of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular poem, the *Amra Choluim Chille*.<sup>67</sup> We know that Adomnán is renowned for his intellectual

<sup>61</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 5, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 128–29.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, § 8, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 130–31.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, § 28, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 137–38.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. the instruction given by Mael Ruain to Mael Díthruib in *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §§ 16 and 39, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 133 and 142.

<sup>65</sup> *Teagasg Maoil Ruain*, § 37, ed. Gwynn, *The Rule of Tallaght*, 22–23. Cf. *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 1, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 127.

<sup>66</sup> *Regula S. Carthagi*, § 8, ed. Mac Eclaise, 'The Rule of St Carthage', 500–01. Columbanus's case is extremely complex, since his teaching was in many ways controversial in Gaul. See on this Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> *Amra Choluim Chille*, ed. and transl. Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus,



achievements: he wrote not only the *Vita S. Columbae* but also a treatise on the Holy places, the *De locis sanctis*. Adomnán was a man of knowledge, a leader of the community as well as an active legislator, the promoter in 697 of a law-tract bearing his name, the *Cáin Adomnáin*, aimed at protecting women and non-combatants.<sup>68</sup> It would be remarkable if he had not represented the patron of his church as resembling himself a little. This would have been all the more understandable since, according to Bede, Adomnán's own authority appears to have been contested by members of his own community in regard to the adopting of international practices of computation.<sup>69</sup> However, the intensity and length of this controversy during Adomnán's abbacy are hardly appreciable, and we cannot infer that it left its mark on the writing of the *Vita S. Columbae*.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Jean-Michel Picard has suggested that Adomnán was writing in response to external menaces, caused on the one hand by the growing influence of Armagh and on the other by 'literary attacks' from Northumbrian churches against the person and memory of Saint Columba.<sup>71</sup> Picard does not seem to have taken into account events internal to the community among the factors motivating the writing of this *vita*.

The depiction by the hagiographer of the saint's last moments contains a strong legitimisation of abbatial authority. Shortly before his passing, Columba was busy copying a Psalter.<sup>72</sup> Having reached

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*Iona. The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, Edinburgh 1994, 96–128 (text and transl. pp. 104–15).

<sup>68</sup> See Herbert, *Iona*, 47–56; Richard Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of St Columba*, Harmondsworth 1995, 43–65. On *Cáin Adomnáin*, see also Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'The *Lex innocentium*. Adomnán's Law for Women, Clerics and Youths, 697 A.D.', *Historical Studies*, 19 (1995), 58–69. Adomnán may also have written a series of canons particularly dealing with food interdictions, on which see *infra*.

<sup>69</sup> Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, V, § 15, and V, § 21, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 504–10 and 550–51.

<sup>70</sup> Bede had specific objectives around which he structured his narration. He conflated different journeys undertaken by Adomnán to Northumbria, and he reduced the sixteen-year period between the voyage made in 687/88 and his death which occurred in 704; a period during which, according to Bede, Adomnán's authority over his monks had declined, as indicated by Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona*, 46–51. The narrative of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* ends with the conversion of the community at Iona by the Englishman Ecgberht (V, § 22). See the discussion by Dumville, 'Derry, Iona, England', 95–99, who shows that Adomnán may have made three voyages to Northumbria.

<sup>71</sup> Jean-Michel Picard, 'The Purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 160–77; id., 'Bede, Adomnán, and the Writing of History', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 50–70.

<sup>72</sup> Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, III, § 23, ed. Anderson and Anderson, 222–23. The translation of the Biblical quotations is that of Richard Sharpe, *Adomnán of*



the verse in Psalm 34, in which is written: 'They that seek the Lord shall not want for anything that is good', Columba decided to stop there and ordered Baithéne to carry on writing. He started at a verse where it is written: 'Come, my sons, hear me; I shall teach you the fear of the Lord'. Adomnán then concluded: 'This was appropriate for Baithéne his successor, a father and a teacher of spiritual sons who, as his predecessor had ordained him to do, followed him not only as a professor, but also as a scribe'.<sup>73</sup> This passage probably had a great significance for the audience of the *Vita*, essentially made up of monks of the Ionian community. Here was expressed a strong justification of the new abbot's authority, modelled on the founder's example.

### 3. *The abbot as organiser of the diet and the food provision of his community*

The importance of the abbot's role in the distribution of food supply in ancient monastic communities is well known. For example, Adalbert de Vogüé has underlined the action of the abbot in providing an increase to their monks' daily ration in exceptional circumstances, such as visits to the monastery by strangers, or during feast-days.<sup>74</sup> As we shall observe, the situation within the Gaelic Churches was no exception, and the *Navigatio* is a prime witness to this aspect of the abbot's function. The food-provision of the community constitutes one of the recurrent elements of the story.<sup>75</sup> At

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*Iona*, 228. About this passage and more generally on material aspects of writing, see Timothy O'Neill, 'Columba the Scribe', in: *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke, Dublin 1997, 69–79 (mention of this passage at pp. 72–73).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, III, § 23, ed. Anderson and Anderson, 222–23: *Successori uero sequens patri spiritualium doctori filiorum, "Venite filii audite me; timorem domini docebo uos", congruenter conuenit, qui sicut decessor commendauit non solum ei docendo sed etiam scribendo successit.*

<sup>74</sup> De Vogüé, 'Travail et alimentation', 242–51. See particularly *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, §§ 40 (*De mensura potus*), 41 (*Quibus horis oportet reficere fratres*), 43 (*De his qui ad opus Dei uel ad mensam tarde occurrunt*), 49 (*De quadragesimae obseruatione*).

<sup>75</sup> Some examples: *Navigatio*, §§ 8, 9 (on the Island of Sheep); 11 (Paradise of Birds); 14 (the abbot orders food rationing); 15 (the repetition of earlier stages); 16 (the gathering of food on the back of the whale); 17 (the abbot distributes the fruits given by the monks of the Island of Anchorites); 18 (Island of Grapes); 28 (arrival at the Promised Land of the Saints where the monks have free and accessible food-supplies), ed. Selmer, pp. 17, 18; 22 and 25; 40 and 44; 47; 52–53; 53; 79.

about the same period, the Life of the abbot Fintán of Tech Munnu, directly associates, in one of the passages devoted to the saint's ascetic formation, the rigour of the rule to austerity regarding food.<sup>76</sup> As we shall see, food-regulations also loom large in the texts related to the *Céli Dé*.

The regulation of food is a dimension of the exercise of abbatial authority linked to the liturgical and penitential domains.<sup>77</sup> This was already true in the middle of the sixth century, as is proved by the *Penitential* attributed to Gildas, which is dominated by questions of purity linked to the prohibition of food. These matters can be conceived in the context of the Holy Office. Several canons deal with the vomiting of the host, another condemns those who cannot chant psalms because of drunkenness.<sup>78</sup> Later, in his *Regula Coenobialis*, Columbanus devoted a great deal of attention to discipline in and around the kitchen and the refectory.<sup>79</sup> If we turn to the texts linked to Mael Ruain and his fellow *Céli Dé*, one is struck by the importance attributed to regulations dealing with his monks' diet in a penitential context, as well as to the ordering of the meal which could be described as 'liturgical'.<sup>80</sup> Here again, there were variations of practice between communities. We learn that Mael Ruain was somewhat stricter, not allowing his monks to drink beer, unless the monk is travelling, while Dublitr did allow his monks to drink beer.<sup>81</sup> In the same fashion, meat was not admitted at Tallaght in Mael Ruain's days, except for deer or wild boar and Dublitr was again more lenient to the point of interceding with Mael Ruain in favour of the monks of Tallaght.<sup>82</sup> Mael Ruain's austerities were also witnessed by his successor, Mael Dithruib, who reported, interestingly, that a saint's feast falling outside Lent was celebrated by the suppression of the

<sup>76</sup> *Vita Prior S. Fintani seu Munnu*, § 6, ed. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 199.

<sup>77</sup> This is a vast domain of potential research only recently opened up. See in general Éric Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2000, 35–39.

<sup>78</sup> Gildas, *Praefatio de Poenitentia*, ed. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 60–65. On Gildas, see in general the essays edited by Michael Lapidge and David Dumville, *Gildas. New Approaches*, Woodbridge 1984.

<sup>79</sup> Columbanus, *Regula Coenobialis*, §§ 2 and 3 (on the brethren having to do kitchen service); 9 (the table as a place of imposition of minor penances; taking of food while travelling); ed. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, pp. 146, 154 and 158.

<sup>80</sup> See O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, 68–81.

<sup>81</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 6, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 129–30.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

vigil at noon, but that no relaxation of diet was allowed in Mael Ruain's days.<sup>83</sup> Other leaders imposed strict regimes in their monasteries, forbidding the drinking of beer, or, in another case, if a monk became merry by drinking beer, he had to fast the following night.<sup>84</sup> The abbot also granted exceptions in particular cases, such as in a time of famine.<sup>85</sup> The opposite could also occur. In the particularly ascetic environment of Iona, an abbot organised for some members of his community a planned famine for specific penitential purposes.<sup>86</sup> The *Rule of Saint Carthach*, a text stemming from a community with a *Céli Dé* element, contains a series of injunctions aimed at policing behaviour in the refectory.<sup>87</sup> The *Monastery of Tallaght* contains an injunction to wash one's hands with clean water immediately if spittle fell on to the hands at mealtime, and the washing of hands was also compulsory when working in the kitchen etc.<sup>88</sup>

Such considerations sometimes find literary expression in hagiographic sources, as in the case of Saint Brigid of Kildare. Both her *Vita* by Cogitosus and the anonymous *Vita* mention the role of food-provider played by the saint. This may be a topos linked to Brigid's femininity, but nonetheless, one passage of the anonymous *Vita I<sup>a</sup>* is particularly suggestive of this role.<sup>89</sup> In it, Brigid is sent by her community to ask Bishop Ibor for rations of grain, since famine is imminent. Brigid is received by the bishop and, as there is nothing else to eat, they are all forced to eat pork. As the scene is set during Lent, this common decision equals renouncing to the fast. Some nuns refuse to eat like the rest of the community, for no obviously stated reason, although a logical one might have been that these

<sup>83</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 22, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 135.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, § 40, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 142–43.

<sup>85</sup> Colomba modified the allowance of food of monks residing on the island of Hinba, according to Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, I, § 21, ed. Anderson and Anderson, pp. 46–47.

<sup>86</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §§ 51 and 52, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 146–47. This example has been quoted by David N. Dumville, *The Churches of Northern Britain in the First Viking-Age*, Whithorn 1997, 13–14.

<sup>87</sup> *Regula Sancti Carthagi*, ed. Mac Eclaise, 'The Rule of St Carthage', 510–15.

<sup>88</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §§ 38 and 43, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 142 and 143.

<sup>89</sup> *Vita I Sanctae Brigitae*, § 50, ed. Bolland, *Acta Sanctorum*, Feb., I, p. 124, which corresponds to § 52 in the numbering adopted in the translation by S. Connolly 'Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae. Background and Historical Value', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 119 (1989), 5–49, here 27. On *topoi*, see Dorothy Ann Bray, 'The Image of Saint Brigit in the Early Irish Church', *Études Celtiques*, 24 (1984), 209–15, particularly p. 210.

nuns did not wish to infringe the fast during the Lenten season even though the abbess had obviously agreed to do so, and by implication allowed her followers to eat meat. Their food is then transformed into snakes and when the news is reported to Brigit, she reprimands her subordinates and orders them to fast outside of the house. She then decides to fast and orders her followers to fast as well. As a result, the snakes are transformed into hosts, which will be used at Easter and Christmas. This story is open to multiple interpretations. It is revealing as it shows the abbess intervening in a context in which the respect (or non-respect) of food-regulation is viewed in a disciplinary perspective.<sup>90</sup> The 'Monastery of Tallaght' provides a contrasting view on this matter. One injunction relates to the eating of meat at Easter. This meat should be either deer or wild boar, but refusal by the monk to eat it, *even if forced to eat* by heathens (most probably Vikings) or by lack of other foodstuffs, is considered as a form of martyrdom and thus highly valued.<sup>91</sup>

Another less spectacular manifestation of such expectation concerning food restrictions can be found in an episode of the *Vita* of Saint Fintán of Tech Munnu, in which a *iuvēnis* among the *monachi* of the saint, who obtained from the latter permission to leave the community to see his family, received the order to drink nothing but water until they both meet again. As the saint died before the young man's return in the community, the latter had to drink water for thirty years, but this water, drunk in a conch blessed by the saint, had the taste of wine.<sup>92</sup> My last case consists of the *Canones* attributed to Saint Adomnán, abbot of Iona, and hagiographer of Columba.<sup>93</sup> Strangely, this text has not attracted the attention of recent historians of the Columban Church and deserves renewed attention.<sup>94</sup> In most of the twenty articles contained in the text, its author deals with a large variety of food interdictions. Considerable influence from Old Testament norms can be seen in this very prac-

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<sup>90</sup> On this passage and similar ones, related to the question of hospitality, see Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church*, 168–70.

<sup>91</sup> *The Monastery of Tallaght*, § 51, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 146.

<sup>92</sup> *Vita Prior S. Fintani Abbatis*, § 23, ed. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, 204.

<sup>93</sup> *Canones Adomnani*, ed. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 176–81 and O'Neill and Dumville, *Cáin Adomnáin*, II, 2–19.

<sup>94</sup> Herbert, *Iona*, pp. 47–56, has concentrated her attention on Adomnán's diplomatic and political activities. Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona*, does not mention this text at all.

tical document, which mentions cases of cattle fallen from a height, of sea-animals found on the shore, and of human or animal corpses fallen into cisterns by accident.<sup>95</sup>

### *Conclusion*

At the close of this account of the abbatial office in the Gaelic churches, it is evident that we cannot detect clear signs of evolution in the exercise of this office during the period under consideration. Still, sources have been taken into account, particularly for the eighth century, and many other facets of the duties of an abbot should be considered. We need to study the role of the abbot within the relationship between the community and the lay-people, both in a pastoral environment, as was mentioned at the beginning of this article, and in relation to the secular elite. The role of the abbot as manager of the temporal possessions of the community still requires further study.

However, this study has established some solid milestones: Columbanus at the end of the sixth century and, two centuries later Mael Ruain and the communities of *Céli Dé*. Indeed, on the basis of works by these ecclesiastics one can detect points in common between the two periods. Firstly, the extraordinary enthusiasm which prevailed at the beginnings of insular monasticism does not seem to have slowed down; quite the contrary as far as Gaelic churches are concerned. Both Columbanus and Mael Ruain were strong, charismatic personalities with shared centres of interest and concerns. Both were rigorous ascetics, but could be capable of some flexibility, and they were willing to listen to the members of their community. Both defined themselves in relation to other communities, more or less rigorous, more or less lax. One should note in this respect the permanence of the freedom from which the abbot seems to benefit in regard to the organisation of his community. This is, in fact, rather similar to the situation prevailing on the Continent, before the Carolingian reforms of ecclesiastical and monastic life, particularly

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<sup>95</sup> See *Canones Adomnani*, §§ 1 (*Marina animalia ad litora delata*), 2 (*Pecora de rupe cadentia*), 9 (*Puteus in quo inuenitur morticinum siue hominis siue canis siue animalis* [. . .]), ed. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 176–77; O'Neill and Dumville, *Cáin Adomnáin*, II, 2–3 and 6–7.

under the impulse of Louis the Pious. What is remarkable is the apparent degree of autonomy they enjoyed from episcopal authority.

We can discern, in differing contexts, a constant interest in the organisation and the quality of devotional life. The provision of food in the community also seems to have been an important responsibility for numerous Gaelic abbots; not only for Columbanus, the leaders of the *Céli Dé* communities, for Adomnán but also, of course, for Brendan, hero of the *Navigatio*. Generally speaking, the links between these two aspects of the everyday life of communities should be explored in greater detail, particularly in their exegetical and anthropological dimensions. The corpus relating to the *Céli Dé* urgently deserves closer study. Equally, if we consider the *Navigatio* as the expression of a specific community's ethos, as bringing a message aimed at religious people, it might be interesting to speculate, on the basis of a reading of this text, about what could have been an hypothetical *\*Regula Sancti Brendani*. In the view of the present writer, common points between the *Navigatio* and *Céli Dé* material are numerous and should be the subject of further study. Extended to a later period including the ninth and tenth centuries, such an enquiry should help to provide a firmer, and if possible definitive, dating to the *Navigatio*.

I have stressed the enduring problems posed by the excesses of asceticism of some monks. This is *a priori* not an insular problem alone; monks who mortified themselves more severely than other members of the community caused serious problems of authority to abbots whose interest lay in organising the life of a whole group of people. Indeed, such zealots could acquire a personal charisma which might overshadow the authority of the abbot, as Giles Constable has aptly noted.<sup>96</sup> One can also add the suspicion which, according to certain *vitae*, surrounded monks whose flamboyant asceticism could cause jealousy among other members of the community. Nevertheless, we can observe continuity in the concern of Gaelic ecclesiastic legislators over these issues, between the sixth and eighth centuries, as well as an injunction to maintain a homogenous group, forbidding

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<sup>96</sup> Giles Constable, 'The Authority of Superiors in Religious Communities', in: *La Notion d'autorité au Moyen Âge. Islam, Byzance, Occident*, ed. George Makdisi *et al.*, Paris 1982, 189–210, at 189–90.

cases of excessive asceticism, as was the case even at Tallaght, renowned for its strong level of asceticism.<sup>97</sup>

The most important point to make at this juncture is that we must realise how plural Gaelic Christendom remained at the end of the eighth century. This variety is synonymous with spiritual richness and intellectual vitality, and there is no doubt that the picture of the abbot and monastic community in the *Navigatio* is consistent with the historical data presented in this chapter.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Mael Ruain did not like excessive marks of devotion or useless self-deprivation of food; see respectively *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §§ 34 and 77, ed. Gwynn and Purton, 141 and 159–60.

<sup>98</sup> I wish to express my thanks to the editors of this volume for inviting me to take part in the gathering at Gargnano. I also wish to thank Professor David N. Dumville (University of Aberdeen) for his advice, as well as Dr Nathalie Stalmans (Brussels) for the information she provided me with. Finally, Dr Jon Coe (Cambridge) has kindly checked my English.





BETWEEN ANGEL AND BEAST:  
BRENDAN, HERZOG ERNST AND THE WORLD  
OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Clara Strijbosch

In the many centuries in which stories were told about him, Saint Brendan was better known as a sailor than as a saint. His fame did not remain limited to his home country of Ireland. On the European continent accounts of the fabulous islands visited by Brendan circulated for centuries. From the tenth to the seventeenth century the Brendan story most generally used as a source, the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, was translated and adapted in many vernaculars throughout western Europe.<sup>1</sup>

About 1150 a distinctive version of the Brendan legend was produced in the area around Trier. This version, which was probably originally written in the Rhinelandish vernacular, is known as *De reis van Sint Brandaan*, in Dutch, or as *Sankt Brandans Reise*, in German scholarship (here *Reise* will be used to refer to this version). The original text has been lost; the story has survived only in later Dutch and German manuscripts and prints.<sup>2</sup> More so than is the case in the *Navigatio*, the journeys among the marvels of creation and the reports of the nature of these marvels are the subject-matter of the story. As is the case in the *Navigatio*, the *Reise* gives an account of Brendan's voyage on the Ocean. But, unlike the *Navigatio*, the saint is sent out on a journey after burning a book, because he refused to believe its story of the marvels of creation. An angel orders him to set sail to see with his own eyes what he did not want to believe. He sees many marvels, writes them down in a book and returns with a full book to Ireland. The relationship of the *Reise* to the *Navigatio* has been a topic of research since the middle of the nineteenth century. It was found that the author of the *Reise* had an

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<sup>1</sup> For references to islands visited by Brendan see Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, *The Legend of Saint Brendan*, Dublin 2000, 91–100; for a survey of surviving *Navigatio* manuscripts and adaptations in the vernacular see pp. 13–20, 49–78.

<sup>2</sup> For a survey of surviving *Reise*-texts see Burgess and Strijbosch, *The Legend*, 60–69.

unorthodox way of treating his Latin source. He was probably intimately acquainted with the *Navigatio*, from oral or written sources, but he did not follow the story closely. He used the *Navigatio* to suit his own purposes.<sup>3</sup>

In the twelfth century, there was a great interest in middle and southern German districts in vernacular texts about journeys to exotic parts, as the survival of a number of such stories shows.<sup>4</sup> One of them is *Herzog Ernst*, which was composed around 1160–70 in the area east of Trier. The *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* have a number of episodes and passages which show remarkable similarities, both when viewed from a wider perspective and in details. They are probably based on a common Latin source relating marvels of the East.<sup>5</sup> In one of the episodes which the two texts share, an encounter is described with crane-headed creatures, who live in a beautiful city. This encounter will be central to the discussion in my article. The concentration on one passage which occurs with many similarities in both the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* does not aim to identify the sources of the theme of the crane-headers. Rather, it intends to draw attention to the perspective offered by the way in which this theme is elaborated in the two texts, and the way in which their twelfth-century audiences imagined and experienced the world in which they lived.

The term ‘world view’ for this experience will be used here in an extended sense. The word ‘world’ refers to more than just the geographical idea of the world or even of the cosmos. As in medieval descriptions of the world and on medieval maps, it also encompasses flora, fauna, ethnography and all kinds of natural phenomena, while ‘view’ does not only pertain to the ‘objective’ or scientific world image as it presents itself to us, but also to the experience of that

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<sup>3</sup> Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin 2000, 27–60, 217–24.

<sup>4</sup> See texts dealt with in Hans Szklenar, *Studien zum Bild des Orients in vorhöfischen deutschen Epen*, Göttingen 1966 (Palaestra, 243).

<sup>5</sup> The *Reise* is quoted here from the edition of the Middle Dutch version C, as edited in W. P. Gerritsen and Soetje Oppenhuis de Jong, ed., Willem Wilmlink, transl., *De Reis van Sint Brandaan. Een reisverhaal uit de twaalfde eeuw*, Amsterdam 1994 (Nederlandse klassieken, 1); the edition of the Middle German version M is in Reinhard Hahn and Christoph Fasbender, ed., *Brandan. Die mitteldeutsche ‘Reise’-Fassung*, Heidelberg 2002 (Jenaer germanistische Forschungen, N.F. 14); *Herzog Ernst* is quoted from Cornelia Weber, ed., *Untersuchung und überlieferungskritische Edition des Herzog Ernst B. Mit einem Abdruck der Fragmente von Fassung A*, Göppingen 1994 (Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 611). For a discussion of the common source of Brendan’s *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* see Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 61–88.

world and the way in which an author dealt with this image for a lay audience. At the same time it is important to bear in mind that the sources at our disposal are narratives. Every opinion stated in the extant texts was filtered by authorial intention and narrative structures. In the full awareness of the presence of this intermediate layer the main objective of this article is to investigate the ideas entertained by the author and his educated, but not especially learned, readers or listeners about the physical appearance of the world they lived in and their own positions in it.

The initial part of the article will first deal with knowledge about the world and the stories. Then follows a more elaborate discussion of the way the world image is embedded in the narratives, broadening out to a consideration of the way in which the world and the stories are experienced. Finally, in the conclusion, narratives and perceptions will be combined.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. *Knowledge about the world and the stories*

The twelfth-century population of western Europe based their view of the world around them on a mixture of actual information and tradition handed down by previous generations. Until well into the fifteenth century much of the information about the world and its creatures derived from classical sources, both scientific and narrative, an important source being the collection of stories about Alexander the Great.<sup>7</sup> Both classical and medieval knowledge are to a modern audience a curious mixture of details which agree with the modern view of the world on the one hand, and inventions which today are considered totally unacceptable, like the stories about monstrous peoples on the other.

The *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst*, both written in the Rhinelandish area, originated in the *oecumene*, the familiar, habitable world. It was generally thought that the world was divided into five zones, two very

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<sup>6</sup> The first paragraphs of this article are based on Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 61–81, 209–17 and on Clara Strijbosch, ‘Schijn bedriegt’, in: Bart Besamusca, Frank Brandsma and Dieuwke van der Poel, ed., *Hoort Wonder! Opstellen voor W. P. Gerritsen bij zijn emeritaat*, Hilversum 2000, 155–59. I re-use them here to develop my argument on world-image and perception.

<sup>7</sup> On this mixture see Rudolf Wittkower, ‘Marvels of the East. A study in the history of monsters’, in: *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London 1977), 46–74, 196–205 (orig. in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), 159–97).

cold ones in the extreme north and south, with below and above them two habitable zones, western Europe being situated in the northern zone.<sup>8</sup> The two were separated by a belt of heat, which it was impossible to cross. Whatever was south of the belt of heat was inaccessible to western Europeans and, as a result, unknown. The inaccessible southern zone was the area where the Antipodes were situated. For centuries the question was debated whether or not it was possible to live in this area, and if so, whether normal human beings lived there. Jerusalem was the centre of the northern habitable zone. This was so according to the Romans, the idea continued to be held in the Middle Ages, and it was given substance by the crusades which got under way towards the end of the eleventh century.

Partly as a result of the crusades, reasonably reliable information about the routes to Jerusalem and about Jerusalem itself was available. Once Jerusalem had been passed, the representations became increasingly vague. Somewhere, in the East, the Earthly Paradise was situated from which Adam and Eve had been driven after the fall, but no one knew for certain whether it was still possible for human beings to reach it. According to the descriptions, it was surrounded by water or fire and was high up on a mountain. Also somewhere in the East, possibly near the Earthly Paradise, there was India, the country of fabulous wealth and of monsters.<sup>9</sup> The edges of the known world were the home of monstrous peoples, among them creatures like the Sciapods, which use their one leg to protect themselves from the sun, the people whose sustenance is the smell of apples, and many others—a living catalogue of deviations from

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<sup>8</sup> Information concerning divisions of the geographical world is taken from Rudolf Simek, *Erde und Kosmos im Mittelalter. Das Weltbild vor Kolumbus*, München 1992, 37–94 and from John Kirtland Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades. A Study in the History of Medieval Science and Tradition in Western Europe*, New York 1925 (American Geographical Society, research series 15), esp. 55–57, 70–72, 156–58. On the Antipodes and their continent see also Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae. Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*, Hannover 1992 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften, 36) esp. 193–202.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, *Geographical Lore* (pp. 256–57) uses the lucid image of four circles of geographical knowledge in the twelfth century. The inner, first circle forms the familiar territory about which first-hand information was to be obtained (western Europe and the routes to the Holy Land and Constantinople), the second is the less well-known area about which relatively reliable knowledge was available (Western Asia and North Africa), the third the unknown territories about which information was equal to rumours (India and Russia), and finally the fourth circle which was totally unknown (Antipodes and Paradise).

the 'normal' representation of human beings. In their most extreme shape these creatures showed traits of human beings and of animals, as was the case with the *cynocephali*, barking human shapes with dog's heads.<sup>10</sup> The whole world was encompassed by an ocean. How the existence of this ocean and the insurpassable belt of heat could be reconciled was never really clarified. Nevertheless this was, from centre to extreme borders, the world in which the journeys of Brendan and Herzog Ernst took place.

Although Brendan's *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* contain a series of partly similar travel episodes, these episodes have been embedded in totally different frameworks. In the *Reise*, Brendan is sent out by an angel for disbelieving the marvellous phenomena about which he had been reading. His undertaking is to convince him of the truth of the marvels. *Herzog Ernst* starts like an epic about an exile. Ernst, stepson of the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and an excellent knight, is falsely slandered and falls out of favour with the emperor. After years of embittered fighting he decides, totally destitute, to go on crusade. On the way to Syria his ship is blown off course by a gale and he spends many years in strange parts of the world where very curious inhabitants live. It is in one of those countries that the episode describing the encounter with the crane-headed creatures is set.<sup>11</sup>

In each of the two texts we are told in this episode that the travellers drift around in their ships for a long time. Then, one day, they see on a high mountain a town which glistens in the sun. They climb the mountain and arrive in a land of plenty. There are delightful gardens where springs rise, the walls of the buildings are encrusted with shining jewels, and in a hall they find tables already set, laden with food. The city is completely deserted. At the moment that the travellers mean to leave, the inhabitants return. An amazing encounter follows. From this moment in the narrative the stories of Brendan and Herzog Ernst diverge.

In Brendan's *Reise* we are told that creatures arrive with necks like cranes, heads like swine and legs like dogs. They are called Walscherands. They are dressed in silk and have bows and arrows in their

<sup>10</sup> See Wittkower, *Marvels*, 46–55, and John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1981, 178–207, on *cynocephali*, pp. 15, 67–73.

<sup>11</sup> *Reise* C vss 1597–2068, ed. Gerritsen and Oppenhuis de Jong, 108–31, M vss 1113–1417, ed. Hahn and Fasbender, 47–60, *Herzog Ernst* vss 2177–3882, ed. Weber, 289–360.

hands. The monsters grunt with displeasure when they find that Brendan and his monks have escaped them. Brendan wisely has his ship drift back from the shore and then asks: "Do you people know God?" At once the monsters drop their bows and one of them answers: "We know him better than you. We saw Him on his throne in Heaven. When the angels revolted we failed to take sides and fell with Lucifer from Heaven. We were punished for our indifference with this repugnant outward appearance, but as we did not have evil in mind we were given our beautiful land to live in. We are hopeful of God's mercy."<sup>12</sup>

In *Herzog Ernst* the travellers, having drifted at sea for three months, arrive in a city called Grippia. When they have reached their ship safely after their visit to the town, Ernst proposes returning there to his friend Wetzel. He wants to have another look at the city, whose beauty has greatly impressed him. During this second visit the two friends suddenly hear the cries of crane-headed creatures. Looking through a window, they watch the approach of a strange group of men and women. Their bodies are as well shaped as the bodies of human beings, but their heads and necks are like those of cranes. They carry bows, arrows and quivers and wear beautiful silk clothes. These are the inhabitants of Grippia, returning from a journey to India where they have abducted a princess as a bride for their king. Wetzel and Ernst watch while the Grippians with the princess in their midst enjoy a copious meal during which they display remarkably refined table manners. The only thing that rather spoils the festive impression is the wailing of the Indian princess. She never stops crying. She cannot understand the cries of the Grippians and to add to her misery the king of the Grippians inserts his beak into her mouth when he wants to kiss her. "This kind of love was unknown to her", the text says.<sup>13</sup> Seeing this, Ernst and Wetzel decide they can no longer stand idly by. They jump into the midst of the crane-headed creatures, but their action leads to a highly unexpected and gruesome end: as soon as the Grippians discover the knights, they attack the princess and stab her to death with their beaks. All Ernst and Wetzel can do is bury her. They fight their way out of the city, but before they manage to reach their ship a group of crane-headed

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<sup>12</sup> *Reise C* vss 1815–2052, dialogue vss 1859–1996, *M* vss 1245–1404, dialogue vss 1263–1376.

<sup>13</sup> *Soliche mynne was ir ee vnkunt/Dye wile sye was in India (Herzog Ernst* vss 3246–47).

creatures from other areas arrives. From the backs of their horses they rain down arrows on the two men. At the cost of heavy losses Ernst and his men manage to escape.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. *The incorporation of the world-image in the stories*

In the two texts the meeting with the crane-headed creatures has been incorporated into the story in very different ways, the variations being due in part to the different social and religious traditions to which these tales belong. In the *Reise* the extraordinary features of the crane-headers are only made part of the events by a discussion based on hindsight, whereas in *Herzog Ernst* they are part of the action. However, both stories contain a startling disclosure, albeit in different places in the series of events and with very different results. In the *Reise* the Walscherands are *Mischwesen* in the extreme: they have crane-necks, pigs' heads and dogs' legs. The latter characteristics have probably been inspired by the second epistle of Saint Peter, which warns against false teachers and refers to an angel whom God sent to the lower Hell. Of those who have left behind the pollution of the world but become entangled in sin once again, it is said: 'But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire'.<sup>15</sup> The strange creatures themselves explain their appearance as follows: 'We failed like the swine which would as soon lie in the mire as in a clean place, and like dogs which fail to bark when a friend harms their master.'<sup>16</sup> This explanation, however, is only loosely connected to the revelation of their former status as angels.

In *Herzog Ernst* the meeting with the crane-headed people is woven into the story in a more convincing and thrilling way than in the *Reise*. When Ernst and his friend have returned to the city of Grippia, they suddenly hear strange sounds. The description of how knights await the unknown and hear the approaching crane-like creatures

<sup>14</sup> *Herzog Ernst* vss 2817–3882, ed. Weber, 315–360.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Peter 2: 4 and 2: 22. The connection of this part of the *Reise* with the Letters of Peter was first established in L. Peeters, 'De reis van Sente Brandane, v. 137–260, *Leuense Bijdragen*, 59 (1970), 28–40, esp. p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Reise* C vss 1963–85; this comparison is not to be found in M, but is represented in P. It probably formed part of the original version O.

raises anxious expectations. In the scenes that follow, the noises the creatures make add to the sense of alienation: the travellers cannot understand them, nor can the Indian princess; it turns her into a point of identification for the audience. The crane-necks may serve as a target for mockery, their beaks function, surprisingly and effectively, as murder weapons. In all respects the *Herzog Ernst* author has made better use of this narrative detail than the *Reise* author and has managed to create far more tension. He does this primarily, as in a modern television thriller, by postponing the actual meeting with the fearsome creatures. During their first tour of the city, the men are uncertain about what is in store for them. They suspect that the absent inhabitants have planned an ambush. On Ernst and Wetzel's return to the city, the meeting with the strange creatures is recounted in a number of steps. The men are sitting at a window, and before they can see anything they hear the curious noise made by the crane-headed creatures. It is only later that they set eyes on the group of Grippians and the readers or listeners see what happens next, as if it were through their eyes. With Ernst and Wetzel we are forced to watch passively how the story develops, and the horrible end approaches inexorably. The Indian princess is stabbed and the two knights barely manage to escape the same fate.

The changes fit the general drift of the stories: an adaptation to the values of Christendom in the *Reise* and to the values of knight-hood in *Herzog Ernst*. Obviously, for an audience interested in chivalric values the tension which is a part of meeting strange and foreign peoples was more important than it was for an audience less interested in armed clashes with antagonistic strangers. The *Reise* is much more peaceful in outlook. There, the country and fortress of the Walscherands have adopted features of the Earthly Paradise. Trees and plants are perennially green, there are fruit trees and there is a spring, as in the Paradises described in Genesis and the Book of Revelation. The travellers no longer feel any fatigue. The mountain on which the fortress is situated is called *Mons Syon*, the designation of the Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem—the latter often part of Paradise in the Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup> Like the Earthly Paradise, the country of the Walscherands is almost impossible to reach. 'If God had not

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<sup>17</sup> On the way the *Multum Bona Terra* is modelled on representations of Earthly Paradise see Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 171–75, 210–13.



taken them there, they would never have been able to tell stories about it', says the text.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the Earthly, biblical Paradise, this Paradise is inhabited by neutral angels, who claim to have fallen from Heaven with Lucifer and subsequently to have been given their repulsive outward appearance as a punishment for their indifference.

In asking whether they know God Brendan behaves like an arrogant missionary. The Walscherands have the better of him with their answer that they know God better than he does. Brendan is misled by their outward appearance. He says: "No one can see God. Your ugly little pigs' eyes have deceived you." Then the Walscherands teach him a lesson. They answer: "You have already got yourself into great difficulties by your disbelief. See how much misery it has caused you that you burned the book. Blessed are they who do not see and yet believe. We saw God in Heaven before the revolt of the angels." After these words Brendan can only depart. Having seen the Walscherands, he may be convinced that there is more than he was willing to believe and that there are creatures in the world who have more knowledge of God and His creation than he has.

In *Herzog Ernst* the empty town and its inhabitants are not described in terms of a medieval Christian Paradise with neutral angels, but as an oriental town like the ones the crusaders must have seen. Only in this case it is inhabited by monstrous and dangerous antagonists. The author of *Herzog Ernst* was far more interested in oriental splendour, chivalry and the art of war than in complicated dogmatic questions of Christian faith or in biblical descriptions.<sup>19</sup>

According to both texts it is difficult to reach the town. In the *Reise* this detail is used to hint at the impossibility of reaching Paradise; in *Herzog Ernst* it is a sign of the town's impregnability. 'There no enemy need be feared', says the text.<sup>20</sup> Overwhelmed by the riches in the fortress Ernst is not on his guard during his second visit. He and his friend Wetzlar see a garden with two springs, one hot and the other cold. Next to them there is a bathhouse with two baths of red gold. Silver tubes lead the water into baths, and from there through the whole town which is cleansed in this way. This is an

<sup>18</sup> C vss 1618–20; M vss 1332–34 not by 'God', but by 'the wild waves' (*die wilden unden*).

<sup>19</sup> On the use made in *Herzog Ernst* of representations of oriental cities see Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 77–78.

<sup>20</sup> *Dye burg stunt gar vnerforcht/Sye vorcht nymans her* (*Herzog Ernst* vss 2240–41).

example of such ingenuity and luxury that Ernst cannot resist the temptation; he takes a bath. Then the inhabitants of Grippia return with the Indian princess. As soon as Ernst sees them, he again misjudges the situation, assuming that he will have no trouble at all in cutting through these creatures' thin necks in a fight. This is a rash assumption and events rapidly take their course to their gruesome end. The Grippians pierce the princess with their beaks while the two knights watch and are powerless to intervene. Ernst and Wetzlar manage to escape only with the assistance of their men. Subsequently, the crane-headed creatures that have come running up prove to be excellent bowmen. On horseback, riding at full gallop, they rain down arrows on Ernst and his men without allowing them, as the text states, a fair fight on the ground; Ernst and his men barely escape. In the world outside his own country things are done in ways which Ernst could not have imagined even in his worst nightmares. In spite of all his chivalry and knowledge of military matters, he finds that he is no match for these superior and ruthless antagonists.

### 3. *Experiencing the world and the stories*

For travellers to the unknown it must have been as vitally important as it is today to assess correctly the intentions of the inhabitants of foreign parts. To people in the twelfth century who were acquainted with crusaders, the adventures experienced by Brendan and Ernst must surely have been more than just amusing stories. Such tales provided examples of what might happen when you left the safety of home. Especially around 1150–60, the decade after the Second Crusade (1147–49), questions about what was beyond the borders of the known territories must have been very topical.<sup>21</sup>

For Brendan and Ernst the encounter with the crane-headed creatures is a shocking experience which robs them of all their certainties. In both cases the travellers underestimate the strange creatures they meet. The saint and the knight start out very carefully. Brendan has his ship drift back from the coast, Ernst warns his men not to

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<sup>21</sup> On the influence of crusades on twelfth-century German authors see Szklenar, *Studien*, 10–26.

take too much food and to be on their guard. However, both of them subsequently make a number of errors of judgement. This need not surprise us, for that is what the authors of the two texts intended. They have given the Walscherands and the Grippians conflicting peculiarities which create tension between the creatures' exterior appearance and their inner being. In the descriptions of the encounters with these *Mischwesen*, twelfth-century wishful thinking about the world and its inhabitants, and at the same time the terror this induced, have been juxtaposed in a bewildering manner.

The Orient was the area where monstrous peoples lived. However, it was also where the Earthly Paradise and the rich and fabled India were said to lie. Monstrous peoples posed a problem for the medieval world order. One of the most important questions in this connection was whether monstrous creatures were human beings. This problem touches upon the core of medieval ideas about the creation and the place of mankind in that creation. Man was created in God's image, as we are told in the very first chapter of the Bible. Was it possible, then, that people existed who were so deviant? 'And God saw everything he had made and, behold, it was very good', says Genesis. Could a creation which harboured monstrous creatures be good?<sup>22</sup> A vexed question in the debate was the status of the *cynocephali*, the population of creatures with dogs' heads. Augustine, whose ideas on anomalies in creation remained influential throughout the Middle Ages, argued that most monstrous peoples should be regarded as human, but that the *cynocephali* were an exception. They were more like animals than people, barking the way they did.<sup>23</sup> Language, in other words, was the distinguishing criterion. In later discussions in the Middle Ages the head was usually considered to be the most crucial element: creatures with ordinary heads were human beings, if they had animals' heads they were not. However, some theoreticians considered the social organisation of the creatures more important than their outward appearance and defended the

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<sup>22</sup> On the difficulties of harmonising Genesis and the existence of monstrous peoples see Marina Münkler and Werner Röcke, 'Der *ordo*-Gedanke und die Hermeneutik der Fremde im Mittelalter. Die Auseinandersetzung mit den monströsen Völkern des Erdrandes', in: *Die Herausforderung durch das Fremde*, ed. Herfried Münkler, with the collaboration of Karin Meßlinger and Bernd Ladwig, Berlin 1998, 701–66, esp. pp. 730–35.

<sup>23</sup> Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, ed. Bernardus Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb, Turnhout 1955 (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, 47–48), here ch. 16, 8, vol. 48, pp. 508–10.

idea that *cynocephali* should be regarded as human beings, as they built cities, worked their fields and wore clothes.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the prevailing view was that what was beautiful was good and what was ugly bad. Because of the deviation from the human image in God's own likeness, a resemblance to animals was considered the ultimate in ugliness.<sup>25</sup>

When Brendan and Ernst arrive in a land with beautiful buildings, luxurious gadgets like silk fly-curtains, with gardens full of fruit trees, birds and fishes, where an abundance of food has been prepared and is ready to be eaten, the expectation is aroused that they have reached Paradise or at least the wealth of India. The visible evidence of human civilisation can hardly have prepared the travellers for the shock awaiting them. When the inhabitants turn out to be creatures with crane-necks or heads, the audience must at once have associated these images with frightening stories about monstrous peoples. In *Herzog Ernst* the information is added that the Grippians have exquisite table manners. On the other hand, it is said of the noise they make that it is like the noise made by cranes and that nobody can understand it. They have a courtly civilisation, but do not speak a human language. Their good manners will have made it even more difficult to decide whether the Grippians should be regarded as human beings or as animals.

The authors of the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* have fully exploited the contrast between the travellers' initial judgements, based on outward appearance, and the revelation of the true nature of the crane-headed creatures. In his discussion of the place of man in creation Augustine argued that man's nature is midway between the nature of an angel and that of an animal.<sup>26</sup> The authors of the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* have taken the extreme limits of what is human, being the angel and the animal, and have presented them in juxtaposition with the travellers' first impressions. The Walscherands act antagonistically and have a repulsive appearance, but prove to have been angels

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<sup>24</sup> For example in Ratramnus of Corbie, edited in: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epist.* 6, ed. E. Dümmler, Berlin 1925, here *Epistola* 12, p. 155.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Hans Robert Jauss, 'Die klassische und die christliche Rechtfertigung des Hässlichen in mittelalterlicher Literatur', in: *Alterität und Modernität der Mittelalterlichen Literatur. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1956–1976*, München 1977, 143–68, esp. pp. 147–56.

<sup>26</sup> Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, ch. 12, 22, CCSL, vol. 48, p. 380.

with a direct knowledge of God. The Grippians impress Ernst and Wetzel with the abundance of their luxury and their courtly table manners. The knights take them for weak antagonists, but they turn out to be beast-like and virtually insuperable murderers.

The encounters with the Walscherands and Grippians reveal the twelfth-century fascination with the relationship between the interior and exterior. In his book *Die Blutstropfen im Schnee* Joachim Bumke discussed twelfth-century theories about perception and knowledge with the famous drops-of-blood-in-the-snow episode from Wolfram's *Parzival* as a starting point.<sup>27</sup> Bumke writes that both scholars and vernacular authors in the twelfth century were fascinated by the relationship between inner and outer appearance, between perception by the senses and by the heart, between body and soul. 'It was not possible to describe or to understand the way the inner senses functioned if the way that the outer senses worked had not been accounted for. This explains why in the twelfth century there was also much more interest in the physical appearance of human beings—their looks, shape, clothing, gestures and sensory perception—than in the previous era. In addition, the insight gained ground in the twelfth century that the body may also be considered the mirror of the soul.'<sup>28</sup>

However, seeing the soul mirrored in someone's physical appearance was neither a simple nor a straightforward matter. Outside the normal world, deviations from the norm became the norm. The forms in which these deviations could manifest themselves and the question as to which inner being was reflected by these manifestations was a source of insecurity, leading ultimately to fundamental questions about the nature of God's creation. In the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* the physical appearance of the crane-like creatures would seem to function as a mirror of the soul only to a very limited extent. The Walscherands in the *Reise* look monstrous, but in their innermost being they are angels. The Grippians present—except

<sup>27</sup> Joachim Bumke, *Die Blutstropfen im Schnee. Über Wahrnehmung und Erkenntnis im 'Parzival' Wolframs von Eschenbach*, Tübingen 2001 (Hermes, 94).

<sup>28</sup> 'Das Funktionieren der inneren Sinne war nicht zu beschreiben und nicht zu verstehen, wenn man nicht vorher geklärt hatte, wie die äußeren Sinne arbeiten. So wird verständlich, daß im 12. Jahrhundert auch die körperliche Erscheinung des Menschen, sein Aussehen, seine Gestalt, seine Kleidung, seine Gestik und seine sinnliche Wahrnehmung, weitaus mehr Interesse fand als in der vorausgegangenen Zeit. [...] Im 12. Jahrhundert gewann daneben die Einsicht an Gewicht, daß der Körper auch als Spiegel der Seele aufgefaßt werden kann' (Bumke, *Blutstropfen*, 21).

for some minor oddities—a well-formed and civilised appearance, but their inner being is monstrous. The events in these episodes lead to the conclusion that beyond the bounds of the familiar world the usual relationship between inside and outside has clearly also been suspended. As a result, making judgements in an unknown world on the basis of observation, as well as on the basis of prejudice (in the sense of ready-made judgements based on familiar experiences), becomes a precarious business: precarious not only for the travellers, but also for the people listening to the account of their experiences. Was what they were being told trustworthy information, and if it was trustworthy, how did it fit in with existing conceptual frameworks and ideas about the world and the creation? These questions have become important thematic subjects in both the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst*. In both texts a connection is made in the prologues between the trustworthiness of the story, the trustworthiness of things seen or heard and the travellers' own experiences. Brendan is sent by an angel on a voyage to see with his own eyes that which he refused to believe. "You'll find out what's true and what's a lie", adds the Heavenly messenger.<sup>29</sup> According to the prologue in *Herzog Ernst* anyone who had been willing to seek danger in foreign parts will believe the story that is about to be told, for they will have experienced these things for themselves.<sup>30</sup>

In both texts the travellers' experiences are fundamentally disrupted in the encounter with the crane-headers, and in both cases the shock leads to insight. In the *Reise* the notion of 'seeing with your own eyes' is given a special and far-reaching significance in the encounter with the Walscherands. When Brendan refuses to accept as true that the monsters have seen God, they tell him that it is better not to see and yet to believe.<sup>31</sup> If Brendan had only judged by what he had seen, he would have regarded the approaching creatures as dangerous, beast-like monsters only. For Ernst the encounter with the Grippians is the low point of his career; many of his men, as well as the Indian princess, pay with their lives for his error of judgement. It is only after these dramatic events that he is able to

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<sup>29</sup> 'Di wert noch wel in inne/Wat waer ofte loghene es' (C vss 66–67, M similar vss 60–61).

<sup>30</sup> *Herzog Ernst* vss 23–30.

<sup>31</sup> *Reise* C vss 1919–22 and 1943–45, M 1319–21 and 1344–47.

save his honour as a noble warrior and magistrate.<sup>32</sup> The implication that he has gained in wisdom as a result of bitter experiences is given extra depth by the explicit statement in the prologue that anyone who has been in foreign parts would recognise the truth of the story.

The shock occasioned by the revelation of the true nature of the creatures encountered by Brendan and Ernst must have had an enormous impact on the audiences of the stories, as these episodes proved that phenomena seen by travellers might well be deceptive. The eye was considered to be the most important of the sensory organs, sight being superior to all the other senses. That even eyesight could be subject to such conflicting or erroneous interpretations cast doubt on the reliability of perception.<sup>33</sup> In the *Reise* the angel who sends Brendan on his journey tells Brendan that he will find out what is true and what is a lie. In *Herzog Ernst* personal experience of foreign parts is posited as a condition for a proper understanding of the story—at least according to the prologue. In both works personal experience is made superior to simple perception, in the prologue and in the story itself.

#### 4. Conclusion

The episode of the encounter between travellers and crane-headers in Brendan's *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst* illustrates succinctly and visually both the twelfth-century world image and the way in which people dealt with that image. The encounter functions as a focal point in which the desires and fears of twelfth-century western Europeans about unknown territories and their inhabitants converge. The greater

<sup>32</sup> On the career of Herzog Ernst see Francis G. Gentry, *Herzog Ernst. An Interpretation*, in: *Fide et Amore. A Festschrift for Hugo Bekker on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Willam C. McDonald and Winder McConnell, Göttingen 1990 (Göttinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 526), 103–19, which is an elaboration of Jürgen Kühnel, 'Zur Struktur des *Herzog Ernst*', *Euphorion*, 73 (1979), 248–71. See also Markus Stock, *Kombinationssinn. Narrative Strukturexperimente im 'Strassburger Alexander', im 'Herzog Ernst B' und im 'König Rother'*, Tübingen 2002 (Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen, 123), esp. 170–226.

<sup>33</sup> See Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp, *Sinne, Gegenstände und Sensibilia. Zur Wahrnehmungslehre des Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden, Boston, Köln 1999 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 66), esp. pp. 22–28, 178–84, 192–97.

the distance from the homeland, the less securely will the travellers be able to rely on their perceptions and usual judgements. At the edges of the world it turns out to be possible for the extremes of ugliness and beauty, superiority and repulsiveness to be found in unexpected combinations. To make matters even more confusing, this unprecedented mix is accompanied by a discrepancy between inner being and outward presentation. According to the *Reise* and *Herzog Ernst*, it is not what the traveller sees with his eyes and hears with his ears which enables him to understand fully the phenomena he encounters. Where there is a clash between strange and familiar, inside and outside, the true nature of the unknown may be comprehended only on the basis of personal—physical and spiritual—experience. A link is forged between actual travels and the proper way of attending to a travel story by connecting in the prologues the trustworthiness of the story to the fact that the travellers themselves have been in unknown territories and had their preconceptions shaken by what had happened to them there. Twelfth-century listeners to the adventures of Brendan and Ernst will have drawn the conclusion that travellers and audience should not judge by appearances, as appearances are deceptive. In that sense, in the twelfth century as in the twenty-first, things are not what they seem.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> I am grateful to Thea Summerfield for her translation of my Dutch text. This article is dedicated to the memory of my father, Jozef Petrus Strijbosch.



THE *NAVIGATIO SANCTI BRENDANI* AND TWO OF ITS  
TWELFTH-CENTURY PALIMPSESTS: THE BRENDAN  
POEMS BY BENEDEIT AND WALTER OF CHÂTILLON

Carsten Wollin

In his famous book *Palimpsestes* the French literary critic Gérard Genette defines a palimpsest both as a codicological term and a hypertextual metaphor:<sup>1</sup>

Un palimpseste est un parchemin dont on a gratté la première inscription pour en tracer une autre, qui ne la cache pas tout à fait, en sorte qu'on peut y lire, par transparence, l'ancien sous le nouveau. On entend donc, au figuré, par palimpsestes (plus littéralement: *hypertextes*), toutes les œuvres dérivées d'une œuvre antérieure, par transformation ou par imitation.

Genette's metaphorical concept of palimpsest will here be applied to the Latin *Navigatio sancti Brendani* and two of its most important retellings composed in twelfth-century England and France, Benedeit's *Voyage of Saint Brendan* and the *Vita sancti Brandani* by Walter of Châtillon. I will show how the original text, the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, in itself already a palimpsest, was written by an unknown monk somewhere within the vast realm of the late Carolingian empire in neat and elegant minuscule letters on an empty sheet of parchment; how more than two hundred years later a Norman clerk at the court of the King of England erased the old letters, altered the story, translated it into the vernacular, and wrote it down again on the same parchment; and how at the exiled Papal curia in France a young poet from Flanders, having carefully read both the Latin original and its French translation, did eventually erase the older layers to replace them with his own Latin poem. Though today the last version may stand and be read by itself, the erased letters of the older texts are still visible and transparent, so that readers are apt to read the old behind the new. My aim in this restricted enquiry is to point

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<sup>1</sup> G. Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*, Paris 1982, text on back cover.

to the several ways in which authors may modify their model without substantially altering or changing the story's plot. In this sense, I have adopted Genette's happily devised metaphor as the title of this paper.

### 1. *The Navigatio sancti Brendani*

Author, time and provenance of the *Navigatio sancti Brandani*<sup>2</sup> are still hidden in the mists of history. It is no more than plausible conjecture that the *Navigatio* was written in Carolingian times by an Irish monk, well acquainted on the one hand with the Vulgate, Biblical Apocrypha, late antique hagiography (e.g. Jerome and the *Vitas patrum*), the *Regula Benedicti* and the *Physiologus*, and on the other hand with the Irish stories of seafarers (*immrama*) and Otherworld journeys (*echtrae*).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, according to Genette's definition, the first of our three texts, the *Navigatio*, is already a palimpsest, written over a large number of older erased texts. Such a heterogenous composition has generated a plurality of different interpretations to this day, depending on the erased text chosen. I will, however, refrain from enumerating or pursuing these different approaches to the *Navigatio*, i.e. the investigation of the sources, or diverse historical, geographical, symbolic and psychoanalytical interpretations.<sup>4</sup>

There is no doubt that the *Navigatio* is a monastic text, composed by a monk and destined for a monastic audience. Therefore, the monastic interpretation, put forth by Ernspteter Ruhe, Josef Semmler and others,<sup>5</sup> will be developed here, on the grounds that it fully

<sup>2</sup> C. Selmer, ed., *Navigatio sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Medieval Studies, 16), repr. Blackrock (Co. Dublin) 1989. The forthcoming editions prepared by G. Orlandi, Milano, and M. Zelzer, Vienna, are eagerly awaited. English translation by J. J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan. Journey to the Promised Land. Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, Mountrath (Portlaoise) 1978 (first trade ed) (Dolmen texts, 1), repr. Dublin 1978 etc., repr. in: W. R. J. Barron and G. S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2002, 26–64.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the contributions by A. M. Fagnoni, P. C. Jacobsen, M. McNamara, and G. Orlandi in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> We are guided through the virtual *mare vastum* of secondary literature by the enormously helpful book of G. S. Burgess and C. Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000.

<sup>5</sup> E. Ruhe, ed., *Benedict. Le Voyage de Saint Brendan*, München 1977 (Klassische Texte des Romanischen Mittelalters, 16), 12–15; J. Semmler, 'Navigatio Brendani', in: *Reisen in reale und mythische Ferne. Reiseliteratur in Mittelalter und Renaissance*, ed.

reflects the author's purpose and intent, without excluding other approaches.

Let me first resume the arguments on which the monastic interpretation depends. All the persons acting in the *Navigatio* are monks and angels sent by God, or their opponents like the traitor Judas along with various devils. Already in Ireland, Brendan's native country, we meet with monks exclusively, first with Abbot Brendan and his community of three thousand, later with Abbot Barrind and his followers, the monk Mernóc, and finally Abbot Enda. On the contrary, we do not encounter laymen, either in Ireland or on the later voyage. While trying to be close to God in the desert of the western Ocean, Mernóc discovers an island (*Insula Deliciosa*) near the Earthly Paradise, for which Mernóc and his Abbot Barrind set sail to stay for one year. On his return, Barrind tells his friend Brendan of all the *mirabilia Dei* seen on the voyage, which do not fail to arouse Brendan's curiosity. He departs with fourteen chosen monks on a voyage to the Earthly Paradise (*Navigatio* ch. 1–2).

Although *curiositas* has long been regarded by patristic and monastic authors as a sinful passion,<sup>6</sup> Brendan's wish to see the *mirabilia Dei* is justified by the holiness of its object. According to the author of the *Navigatio*, it is God's own wish to show Brendan and his *familia* the marvels of His creation. This is explicitly stated in Brendan's address to his fourteen companions. Only then will Brendan set out on this journey when his brethren have given their counsel and God so wishes:

*"Conbellatores mei amantissimi, consilium atque adiutorium a uobis prestolor, quia cor meum et omnes cogitationes mee conglutinate sunt in una uoluntate. Tantum si uoluntas Dei est, terram, de qua locutus est pater Barinthus, repromissionis sanctorum in corde meo proposui querere. Quomodo uobis uidetur, aut quod consilium mihi uultis dare?"* (*Nav.* ch. 2)

("From you who are dear to me and share the good fight with me I look for advice and help, for my heart and all my thoughts are fixed on one determination. I have resolved in my heart if it is God's will and only if it is to go in search of the Promised Land of the Saints of which father Barrind spoke. How does this seem to you? What advice would you give?")

P. Wunderli, Düsseldorf 1993, 103–23; J. M. Wooding, 'The Latin Version', in: Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, 13–25.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. H. Blumenberg, *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*, Frankfurt am Main 1973.

On all the inhabited islands that Brendan and his *familia* discover on their journey there live monks, observing different kinds of monastic life. Thus on the Island of Ailbe (ch. 12) he meets a community of twenty-three monks, who under the guidance of their abbot lead a cenobitic life. Many years before, they followed Ailbe, the meanwhile deceased founder of their monastery, to this island. Entirely devoted to the praising of God in both prayer and liturgy, they are miraculously sustained by heavenly grace. On another island the travellers encounter three choirs of monks (ch. 17), distinguished by their age and the different colour of their clothes. Of them we only learn that they alternately sing psalms (*laus perennis*) and live on marvellous fruits, called *scaltae*. In chapter 26 Brendan hears from the Hermit Paul that in his youth he lived as a monk in the monastery of St Patrick, till in a dream-vision the saint commanded him to leave his cloister and sail on a small ship to a tiny rocky island in the midst of the Ocean. There he has now been living for ninety years as an anchorite. He dwells in two hollows inside the top of the rock where a small fountain rises at the entrance of one of them only to be immediately absorbed by the ground—a setting reminiscent of Jerome's *Vita Pauli*. Like so many desert saints Paul does not wear clothes, instead his naked body is covered by his long white hair and beard. He too is nourished by God: during the first thirty years a tame otter brought him a fish twice a week; for the last sixty years he had been exclusively sustained by the nourishing water of the fountain.

The author of the *Navigatio* offers more circumstantial details whenever he describes actions and sites that are especially relevant to the pursuit of monastic life. To mention only one example: on the Island of Ailbe (ch. 12). Brendan and his *familia* are greeted by an old man, who silently falls down at Brendan's feet three times before he bestows the kiss of welcome. Then, without yet uttering a word, he guides Brendan to the monastery; Brendan in his turn, having grasped the meaning, enjoins the observance of silence on his monks, too. They then meet eleven monks carrying reliquaries and crosses while they sing hymns. After receiving the kiss of peace from the abbot, the travellers are led into the monastery, where they have their feet washed by the abbot. Eventually, they proceed to the refectory for a silent meal. The same episode minutely describes the design of the monastery's church, its interior furnishings and the seating of both abbot and monks. We are also offered a detailed description of the

monastic office observed by the *familia Albei*. The incipit of each psalm or hymn sung at a certain hour is given with the utmost accuracy. In addition, the author explicitly points to liturgical peculiarities such as the *laus perennis* in the Community of Ailbe or on the Island of the Three Choirs.

Brendan's journey is made up of the sevenfold repetition of a one-year cycle, which follows the liturgical year:<sup>7</sup> each year on Maundy Thursday the monks celebrate the Lord's Supper on the Island of Sheep (ch. 9) and the Easter vigil on the back of the friendly whale Jasconius (ch. 10). In the Paradise of Birds they spend the time between Easter and Pentecost (ch. 11), and with the Community of Ailbe they celebrate Christmas (ch. 12). Only in the seventh and last year of their voyage do the travellers reach the Island of Smiths and the Fiery Mountain (ch. 23–24), the rock of Judas Iscariot (ch. 25), the Island of Paul the Hermit (ch. 26) and eventually the Earthly Paradise (ch. 28). Their direct return to Ireland lasts only a few weeks or months.<sup>8</sup>

This sevenfold sequence of single episodes is mainly held together by the quest for the *Terra Repromissionis Sanctorum*. Another link is provided by the successive disappearance of the three late-coming monks, whose fate has been foretold by Brendan when leaving the shores of Ireland (ch. 5): having confessed his sins, the first latecomer dies in the Uninhabited City (ch. 6–7), the second remains on the Island of the Three Choirs (ch. 17) and the third is dragged into Hell by the devils (ch. 24).<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to the fixed points mentioned above which allow the travellers to recover in a familiar monastic surrounding stand the encounters with monsters and the marvels of the western Sea that arouse both fear and fascination.<sup>10</sup> These *mirabilia*, however dangerous

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. H. Caulkins, 'Les notations numériques et temporelles dans la *Navigatio de saint Brendan* de Benedeit', *Le Moyen Age*, 80 (1974), 245–60.

<sup>8</sup> We read that Barrind's journey to the island of Mernóc (*Insula deliciosa*) lasts only three days, the transit to the Earthly Paradise only one hour (ch. 1); but there are no clear indications regarding the duration of Brendan's return (ch. 28).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. W. Haug, 'Vom Imram zur Aventure-Fahrt. Zur Frage nach der Vorgeschichte der hochhöfischen Epenstruktur', in: W. Haug, *Strukturen als Schlüssel zur Welt*, Tübingen 1989, 379–408; T. Carp, 'The Three Late-Coming Monks. Tradition and Invention in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 12 (1984), 127–42.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. D. Poirion, *Le merveilleux dans la littérature française du Moyen Age*, Paris 1982, 2nd ed. 1995, 13–18; J. Le Goff, 'Le merveilleux nordique médiéval', in: *Pour Jean Malaurie*, S. Devers, ed., Paris 1990, 21–28.

they may be, stand not outside divine creation but form an integral part of it. The monks are providentially brought to recognise God's omnipotence in marvels and even mortal dangers. They are not helplessly exposed to the dangers of the sea, as they themselves might be tempted to believe, because God himself is willing to protect them. Yet, full confidence in God's guidance and help is exhibited by Brendan alone; in the face of dangerous situations he untiringly commands his companions to offer their prayers up to God. Whenever they do so, or whenever their abbot prays for them, God helps immediately. Though Brendan's insistence on confiding in God is directed within the narrative only to his *familia*, outside it it is so to all readers whom the author wants to read and imitate this as an example of unfailing faith.

The descriptions of punishment in Hell and joy in Paradise reflect the same intention, for the reality of Hell and Paradise assures man of eternal justice and divine providence. It is this conviction that Brendan and his monks attain, when they behold with their own eyes the Fiery Mountain, listen to Judas's story and eventually enter a part of the Earthly Paradise.

The intention of the *Navigatio* is readily defined by reference to its monastic audience, to which the ideal of monastic life in all its different facets, cenobitic or eremitic, is held up. Such a life is said to consist of praising God in prayer, liturgy and obedience. Even in the unknown and dangerous regions of the western Ocean, even at the end of the world, God takes care of his followers. He sends provisions to his monks in whatever uninhabitable regions they dwell, and protects them from all the dangers of the sea. This ideal picture of monastic life fulfils two different functions:<sup>11</sup> (1) It wins the reader's or listener's (who can only be thought of as a monk) *admiration* which should develop into active *aemulatio*; (2) it affords the knowledge that everywhere in the world men living as monks are protected by God, a knowledge capable of confirming the reader or listener in the kind of spiritual life he has chosen for himself, thus leading to spiritual *aedificatio*.

It is possible to envisage the monastic world depicted in the *Navigatio* as the first Utopia of the Middle Ages. This Utopian world is situ-

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<sup>11</sup> On this concept of 'Rezeptionsästhetik' see H. R. Jauß, *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*, vol. 1, München 1977, 220.

ated in a *Wunschraum*, i.e. the unknown areas of the western Ocean. Society itself is described in monastic rather than political terms, as is the case in almost all medieval Utopias.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. *Benedeit's Anglo-Norman Voyage of Saint Brendan*

For centuries the *Navigatio sancti Brendani* enjoyed enormous popularity. It was copied in far more than the 125 manuscripts still extant and read in almost all the countries of western Europe. At the beginning of the twelfth century the *Navigatio* inspired the Norman cleric Benedeit to retell the story in one of the earliest and most remarkable works of Old French literature. Benedeit in some way had access to, or was even a member of the court of King Henry I *Beauclerc* of England (reigned 1100–1135),<sup>13</sup> where he wrote a poem of about 1840 lines in the Anglo-Norman dialect, labelled *Voyage of Saint Brendan* by modern editors.<sup>14</sup> The poem was probably dedicated originally to Henry's first wife Matilda (queen 1100, died 1118). But some years later, Benedeit re-dedicated the poem to the king's second wife, Adeliza of Louvain (queen 1125–1135, died 1151), by changing the name in the Prologue.<sup>15</sup>

Benedeit modifies the structure of the story slightly, if effectively.<sup>16</sup> He transposes the first and very detailed description of the Earthly

<sup>12</sup> On the debated question whether there were Utopias or even Utopian thought in the Middle Ages cf. F. Seibt, 'Utopie im Mittelalter', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 208 (1969), 555–94; id., *Utopica*, Düsseldorf 1972, 2nd ed. München 2001, 13–47; O. G. Oexle, 'Utopie', in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 8 (1997), 1345–48.

<sup>13</sup> On Henry's court see R. R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident (500–1200)*, vol. II/2, Paris 1960, 410–22; W. F. Schirmer and U. Broich, *Studien zum literarischen Patronat im England des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Köln and Opladen 1962, 12–17; M. D. Legge, 'L'influence littéraire de la cour d'Henri Beauclerc', in: *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune*, Gembloux 1969, vol. 1, 679–87.

<sup>14</sup> *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St. Brendan by Benedeit, a poem of the Early Twelfth Century*, ed. E. G. R. Waters, Oxford 1928, repr. Genève 1974; *Benedeit. The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*, ed. I. Short and B. Merrilees, Manchester 1979; all French quotations are taken from Waters' edition, Burgess's English translation from Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, 65–102.

<sup>15</sup> This convincing explanation has been proposed by R. L. G. Ritchie, 'The Date of the *Voyage of St Brendan*', *Medium Aevum*, 19 (1950), 64–66. See also the contribution of Glyn Burgess in this volume.

<sup>16</sup> I make use of the detailed comparisons made by Waters, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage*, lxxx–cv; Ruhe, *Benedeit*, 19–31; R. A. Bartoli, *La Navigatio sancti Brendani e la sua fortuna nella cultura romanza dell'età di mezzo*, Fasano 1990, 2nd ed. 1993, *passim*.

Paradise by Barrind (*Navigatio* ch. 1) to the end of the narrative in order to avoid an anti-climax, which would have resulted from anticipating the journey's destination before the departure. Some episodes are completely omitted, such as the visit to Saint Enda (ch. 3), the episodes of the Isle of the Three Choirs (ch. 17) and of the Isle of Grapes (ch. 18). It may be conjectured that Benedeit suspected them of impeding a more tightly-knit structure and thus of disrupting the natural flow of the narrative. On the other hand, he added new material, by starting the poem off with a Prologue and a dedication to the queen (vss 1–18), further by mentioning Brendan's wish that God show him Hell and Paradise before his death (39–70), by telling about the mysterious disappearance of a monk (1499–510) and by depicting the walls of Paradise (1709–34).

But it is mainly in the field of poetic expression and style, the *artificium* of medieval poetics,<sup>17</sup> that Benedeit proves innovative. The diction of his poem is clearly aimed at the taste and self-perception of noblemen in the court of the English king. To illustrate this, I have chosen a few examples.

The original, but somewhat circumstantial description of Brendan's Irish provenance *Sanctus Brendanus, filius Finlocha nepotis Althi, de genere Eogeni stagni Len regionis Mumenensium ortus fuit* (ch. 1)<sup>18</sup> ('Saint Brendan, son of Findlug, descendant of Alte, was born among the Eoganacht of Loch Léin in the land of the men of Munster') is replaced by a short reference to his royal ancestry, unknown to the *Navigatio*:

*Icist seinz Deu fud ned de reis*  
*De naisance fud des Ireis.* (vss 19–20)

(This saint of God was of royal birth and of Irish descent).

In Benedeit's version Brendan is no longer driven by mere curiosity but in his prayers he has been seized by a compelling desire for knowledge. Before his death he wants to see 'the future abode of the good, as well as the place where the evil would dwell and the reward they would receive':

<sup>17</sup> On the poetics of *materia* and *artificium* see F. J. Worstbrock, 'Wiedererzählen und Übersetzen', in: *Mittelalter und frühe Neuzeit. Übergänge, Umbrüche und Neuansätze*, ed. W. Haug, Tübingen 1999 (Fortuna vitrea, 16), 128–42; D. Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion. Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance*, Leiden 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Selmer's Latin text has been corrected according to G. Orlandi's forthcoming edition of the *Navigatio*.



*Ainz qu'il murget voldreit saveir  
 Quel sed li bon devrunt aveir,  
 Quel lu li mal aveir devrunt,  
 Quel merite il recevrunt.* (vss 61–64)

Obviously the author takes a keen interest in the vivid depiction of precious objects and materials. The Uninhabited City boasts walls built of crystal, marble palaces, walls of gems, all worthy of kings, if not of emperors. But no dwellings made of wood exist:

*Dreit les meinet a un castel  
 Que riches ert e grant e bel,  
 E resemblout mult regal leu,  
 D'empereür mult riche feu.  
 Entrerent enz dedenz le mur  
 Qui tuz ert faiz de cristal dur;  
 Paleiz veient tuz a marbre,  
 N'i out maisun faite de arbre;  
 Gemmes od l'or funt grant clartét  
 Dun entailét sunt li parét.* (vss 267–76)

(It took them straight to a castle which was large, splendid and beautiful; it had the appearance of a truly royal palace, an emperor's magnificent estate. They all made their way inside its walls, which were of solid crystal, and saw a palace constructed entirely of marble; none of the buildings was made of wood and the golden gems with which the walls were covered gave off a bright light.)

The two fights between the sea-serpents (vss 897–968) and between griffin and dragon (vss 1005–34) are recounted in great, almost realistic and graphic detail. Benedeit's language and his comparisons require no previous Latin education; they are taken from the everyday experience of the contemporary layman.

Besides, Benedeit omits all quotations from the monastic office and the liturgical hours that would have been incomprehensible and meaningless to his lay audience. Instead, he inserts pious reflections into the narrative, at the end of an episode. Such reflections deal mostly with God's care for and the faith of his believers.<sup>19</sup> The author tries to derive his moral lesson from the end of each episode, a

<sup>19</sup> The following gives a list of Benedeit's reflections: God cares for his flock, 241–46; the monks travel at God's command who wants them to behold the marvels of His creation, 371–76; starvation is to be preferred to the neglect of prayer, 821–22; confidence in God to despair, 957–68; the saint's happiness consists of the endurance of labours, the sight of Hell confirming the monks' faith, 1177–86.

technique that can be aptly illustrated from the fight of the sea-serpents (vss 897–968). At the very moment when a sea-serpent attacks and nearly capsizes Brendan's boat, the abbot and his *familia* pray to God who promptly responds by sending a second sea-serpent for their protection. This serpent kills the attacker and then retires. From this the author draws the following conclusion:

*Ne deit li hom mais desperer,  
Ainz deit sa fait plus averer,  
Quant veit que Deus si prestement  
Vivere trovet e vestement,  
E tanz succurs en perilz forz,  
E estorses de tantes morz.* (vss 957–62)

(No one should ever despair, rather one's faith should grow stronger when one sees that God so readily provides food and clothing, as well as aid in times of grave danger and succour from the jaws of death.)

Then Benedeit makes Brendan and his monks restate his own authorial reflections in a brief conversation:

*L'abes lur dist: 'Laisum tut el:  
Seignur servir bien deit l'um tel.'  
Cil respunt mult volunters:  
'Quar bien savum que nus ad chers.'  
Puis al demain terre veient,  
E ariver bien se creient.* (vss 963–68)

(The abbot said to them: "Let us ignore all else, for one should serve such a lord." They replied most willingly to this: "We know how much he cherishes us." The next day they sighted land and felt sure they could reach it.)

The torments of Hell to which Judas Iscariot is subjected are touched upon in the *Navigatio* (ch. 25) in only one sentence. Here Judas says to Brendan: "For I burn, like a lump of molten lead in a pot, day and night, in the centre of the mountain that you have seen" ("*Nam ardeo sicut massa plumbi liquefacta in olla die ac nocte in medio montis, quem uidistis*"). This single sentence has been amplified by Benedeit into a very detailed and gruesome description of 110 lines (vss 1329–438), using motifs from Otherworld visions (perhaps modelled on the popular *Visio Pauli*, while other sources may be lost or as yet unidentified). Judas himself tells Brendan of the two hells, one above, and one below the sea, and the cruel tortures he suffers on each day of the week: on Monday, he is whirled around on a fast turning wheel; Tuesday, he is laid on a bed with sharp iron spits; on Wednesday,

he is cooked in pitch and then roasted; on Thursday, he is thrown into an ice-cold and dark dungeon; on Friday, he is flayed ten times, then bathed in soot mixed with salt and finally forced by the devils to empty a cup of molten lead and copper; on Saturday, he is thrown into a foul-smelling prison while his stomach is still aching and nearly bursting because he drank the cup of Hell. On Sunday, he is allowed to rest on a small rock in the midst of the stormy sea. In this passage Benedeit has composed one of the most important and powerful Otherworld visions of the early twelfth century, but as it is written in the vernacular his vision is still little known and has escaped the notice of most scholars. This feature, moreover, makes Benedeit appear to be a distinctly modern author, whose vision ranks with the largely contemporary Latin visions of Albericus, Tnugdalus and Gunthelmus, thus inaugurating a literary genre that will reach its first peak at the end of the century in the visions of Owein, Godeschalcus and Thurchill.<sup>20</sup>

With Genette we may call Benedeit's change of poetic language and style *transstylisation*.<sup>21</sup> Benedeit's purpose is clear enough. He tries to adapt his poem to the language, tastes, interests and self-perception of his courtly audience. In this way, the old material gains in vividness and visual description, because Benedeit takes all his concepts and images from everyday life. The ostentatious depiction of costly metals and precious stones is of great importance to both his poem and his audience. Even the monks of Ailbe are represented as being dressed in costly tunics and carrying heavily ornamented reliquaries, admittedly a very worldly view of Benedictine life, but in accordance with the Norman customs of Benedeit's time. The fights between the sea-serpents and the monsters are described in great detail, much as are the battles in the *chansons de geste*. As the torments Judas suffers in Hell are seen as physical torments only, we are taken far from the original view of the Fathers who considered them to be merely a symbolical expression of the soul's immaterial punishment. The different kinds of torture may have been taken from the repertoire of any medieval torturer.

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<sup>20</sup> See the chronological list of visions in: P. Dinzelbacher, *Revelationes*, Turnhout 1991 (Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, Fasc. 57), 89–108, where Benedeit is missing. On Benedeit cf. D. D. R. Owen, *The Vision of Hell*, Edinburgh 1970, 51–81; J. Baschet, *Les justices de l'au-delà*, Roma 1993 (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 279), 99–134.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 315–21.

In the same way, the joys of Paradise are considered to be material: its wall is embellished by the twelve precious stones mentioned in the Book of Revelation (21:18–21), yet devoid of any allegorical meaning or spiritual power. Instead, they again form only part of the sumptuous decoration and architecture. The area of the Earthly Paradise which mortal men such as Brendan may visit is described as a perfect *locus amoenus*, perhaps one of the first to occur in Old French literature. Besides rivers of milk and honey, eternal mild summer (not spring!), fragrant flowers and trees, we also encounter woods full of game and rivers abounding in fish. It seems that the blessed should not be denied the option of going hunting and fishing, even in Paradise:

*Flurs e arbres tuzdis chargent,  
Ne pur saisun unc ne targent;  
Esteit süef tuzdis i est,  
Li fruiç de arbres e de flurs prest,  
Bois repleniz de veneisun,  
E tut li flum de bon peisun.* (vss 1749–54)

(The flowers and trees bear fruit all year round, with no seasonal changes to delay them; there is permanently pleasant summer there with fruit on the trees and flowers always in bloom. The woods are always full of game and there is good fish in all the rivers.)

Benedeit's courtly audience is not likely to have been in great sympathy with anything reminiscent of *contemptus mundi* and the ascetic life led by Irish monks. Therefore, the detailed account of monastic customs and all quotations from the canonical hours are omitted; on the contrary, everything strange and marvellous about the monks' life in the western Ocean is given special emphasis. In other words, in Benedeit's version courtly entertainment, as well as worldly pleasures, exciting adventures and fascinating marvels, reign supreme.

Occupied mainly with the relationship between Benedeit's poem and the *Navigatio*, modern critics have long overlooked the fact that Benedeit inaugurates the very blossoming of Old French romance in the mid twelfth century. Brian Merrilees has gathered some of the most important innovations:<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> B. Merrilees, 'The *Anglo-Norman Voyage of Saint Brendan*: precocious or unique? A commentary on recent work', *Parergon*, 31 (1981), 21–28.

1. Benedeit abandons the decasyllabic line employed in the *Chanson de Roland* or the *Chanson de saint Alexis*, while embracing the octosyllabic rhyming couplet that will become the standard verse of Old French romance.
2. The *Voyage of Saint Brendan* is the first Old French poem to exhibit the *quest structure*, as defined by Northrop Frye.<sup>23</sup> Brendan's voyage can be seen as a quest for Hell and Paradise, divided into the beginning of the journey, its first adventures, the crucial struggle and the final exaltation of the hero. Although the story is made up of a series of self-contained episodes, the theme of the quest more prominently links the different parts of the narrative, with a view to the final revelation of the Earthly Paradise. Such structures clearly announce the later *roman d'aventure*.
3. Moreover, Benedeit's poem is the first extant work of Old French literature which makes extensive use of Irish and Celtic material. In this respect too, the author succumbs to the tastes and interests of his audience, which are well attested all over Europe at the beginning of the twelfth century. We are reminded of the reliefs in the cathedral of Modena or of the famous mosaic of Otranto, both largely contemporaneous with Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie* (c. 1135–1138). Benedeit himself, as we have to remember, wrote some twenty years earlier than the famous Celtic bard Bléheri, 'who knew the prowess and the tales of all kings, of all the counts, who lived in Brittany' (*Ky solt les gestes et les cuntres/De tuz les reis, de tuz les cuntres/Qui orent esté en Bretaingne*).<sup>24</sup> We know from contemporary sources that Bléheri's poems were in great favour with Count William VIII of Poitiers (1127–37; William X as Duke of Aquitaine), the father of Eleanor of Aquitaine. But, alas, they were either not written down or were lost during the following centuries. We shall return to the *matière*

<sup>23</sup> N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton 1957, 186–88; M. Burrell, 'Narrative Structures in *Le Voyage de St Brendan*', *Parergon*, 17 (1977), 3–9. See also Haug, 'Vom Imram', 382.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, *Tristan*, vss 21–23. On Bléheri see R. S. Loomis, 'Bleheris and the Tristram Story', *Modern Language Notes*, 39 (1924), 319–29; E. Brugger, 'Der Dichter Bledri-Bleheri-Breri', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 47 (1924), 162–85; P. Gallais, 'Bleheri, la cour de Poitiers et la diffusion des récits arthuriens sur le continent', in: *Actes du VIIe congrès national de littérature comparée*, Paris 1967, 47–79, who believes Bléheri to have been active much earlier, in the time of Count William VII *Le troubadour* (1086–1126, as duke William IX).

de Bretagne again in *Erec et Enide* (c. 1170), the first Arthurian romance by Chrétien de Troyes.

4. As shown above, the character of Benedeit's Otherworld vision and the depiction of Judas's torments in Hell are wholly innovative.
5. The *Voyage*, moreover, might have been regarded as a model by Chrétien de Troyes, who probably imitated the episode of the Paradise of Birds in his *Yvain*.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. *Walter of Châtillon's Vita sancti Brandani*

#### 3.1. *The author and his patron*

Let me now come to the third text in our purview, the *Vita sancti Brandani* (Inc. *Vana uanis garriat pagina pagana*).<sup>26</sup> This Latin poem of 1248 lines in 312 Goliardic stanzas, though transmitted anonymously, has been convincingly ascribed by the late Bernhard Bischoff to Walter of Châtillon, one of the most prolific Latin poets of the twelfth century (c. 1130–1200).<sup>27</sup> The *Vita sancti Brandani* was commissioned by Pope Alexander III (pope 1159–1181) while staying in his French exile at Sens and Paris from 1162 until 1165.

The poem's dedication to the pope is in no way surprising. We know from Walter's rhythmical poems that, since his early days as a poet, he was in close contact with Alexander. In one of his earliest satires, *Eliconis riuulo* (W 7),<sup>28</sup> he laments the schism of 1159, yet seems to be undecided as to which party to favour. But shortly after 1160 we find him on the side of Alexander, together with the French and English clergy. In the satire *Propter Sion non tacebo* (W 2),

<sup>25</sup> Cf. E. Kölbing, 'Christian von Troyes *Yvain* und die Brandanuslegende', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, N.F. 11 (1898), 442–48.

<sup>26</sup> C. Wollin, ed., *Saints' Lives by Walter of Châtillon. Brendan, Alexis, Thomas Becket*, Toronto 2002 (Toronto Medieval Latin Texts, 27) which replaces the older edition of E. Martin, 'Lateinische Übersetzung des altfranzösischen Gedichts auf S. Brandan', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, 16, N.S. 4 (1873), 289–322. Hitherto the poem has received attention only from Waters, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage*, cxv–cxxv.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. G. Orlandi, 'San Brendano, Gualtiero di Châtillon e Bernhard Bischoff', *Istituto Lombardo, Rendiconti, Classe di Lettere e Scienze Morali e Storiche*, 128 (1994), 425–40. On Walter's life and works see M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. 3, München 1931, 920–36; M. K. Lafferty, *Walter of Châtillon's Alexandreis*, Turnhout 1998.

<sup>28</sup> The numbering of poems follows the edition *Moralisch-satirische Gedichte Walters von Chatillon*, ed. K. Strecker, Heidelberg 1929.

written about 1175, he expressly testifies to his earlier sojourn at the pope's court in France (1162–1165). We also learn that his poetic recitation there left a lasting impression, because years later he was still remembered by Italian members of the curia. In France he seems to have been on friendly terms with Alexander himself, whose renown as a literary patron was by then well established. Then, in the 1170s, Walter embarks on an Italian journey to regain the favour of Alexander, before whom he will recite his famous satire on greedy Rome, *Propter Sion non tacebo* (W 2), and his poetical request for a fitting prebend *Tanto uiro locuturi* (W 1). On this journey he appears to be for some time in the entourage of Alexander himself and of Cardinal Peter of Pavia (1171–1175 bishop elect of Meaux, died 1182), whose liberality is praised in satire W 2.

In the Prologue to the *Vita sancti Brandani* Walter states that he 'renews an old script' (*scriptum uetus renouo* st. 8, 3), also called *rithmus Romanus*, which can be identified with Benedeit's Anglo-Norman *Voyage of Saint Brendan*. It is at the command of one *signifer Alexander* that Walter claims to have set about his work. From the fact that Bernhard Bischoff has identified this *signifer* as Pope Alexander III, a good deal of new information on both the early reception of Benedeit's *Voyage* and the genesis of Walter's poem may now be gained.

To begin with, Benedeit's *Voyage of Saint Brendan* must have been familiar, if not highly appreciated, among the members of the papal court at Sens and Paris. Benedeit's fascinating *roman d'aventure*, originally composed for the Anglo-Norman court of Henry I *Beauclerc*, obviously remained good reading for French-speaking clergy half a century later. Pope Alexander, having himself become acquainted with Benedeit's version, decided to commission a Latin translation. Though we know of none of his specific reasons, we may be right in suspecting his familiarity with the linguistic peculiarities of the Anglo-Norman dialect or his perfect command of Old French in general. The commission was intrusted to Walter, a young poet from the Flemish town of Lille (*Insula*) who had already studied at Reims, Paris and Bologna and acquired renown for his outstanding mastery of rhythmic verse. Papal patronage must have been felt to be a high honour by Walter, at any rate in addition to a financial remuneration, or the provision of a prebend. Perhaps it is through the good offices of Alexander that Walter subsequently became *scholasticus* in Châtillon-sur-Marne (*Castellio*). In return, the pope was presented with

an epic poem in elegant Latin which earned him the prestige of having encouraged such a masterly piece of literature.

Some passages in the *Vita sancti Brandani* suggest that Walter had recited an earlier draft, or at least parts of the poem, to the members of the curia who pointed to an episode in the *Navigatio* omitted by Benedeit. It was at their request that Walter compared the two sources afresh and added the Isle of the Three Choirs episode to his own poem (st. 154–70). Therefore, Walter is likely to have stayed for quite a long time, or at least repeatedly, at the curia. Perhaps it was during this time that he took on the role of a ‘court poet’, a fact important for the study of papal patronage because it has not hitherto been known that at Alexander’s court, in addition to the encouragement of theological, exegetical or canonist works, literary interests of a more liberal kind were cultivated. Alexander and members of the curia obviously favoured entertaining narratives such as Benedeit’s Old French *Voyage* or Walter’s Latin poem.

### 3.2. *The sources*

Walter is quite frank about his sources. In the Prologue he mentions the *Voyage of Saint Brendan (rithmo de Romano)*, though he does not explicitly give Benedeit’s name, either simply because it did not occur in the manuscript he had before him or because his knowledge of Benedeit did not extend beyond ours. Walter uses four different verbs to describe his poetic ‘translation’ (st. 8, 1–3):

- *Modis [. . .] rithmicis explano*
- *transferens rithmo de Romano*
- *scriptum uetus renouo*
- *hec noua cano.*

Of these *transfere* alone matches the modern concept of translation (*translatio*), while the meaning of the others, especially *renouare* and *noua canere*, goes further. Walter believes his own achievement to lie in the renewal (*renouare*) of an older given subject (*materia*) by means of poetic *artificium*.<sup>29</sup> To the several usages and conceptions of *renouatio* in the twelfth century, to which this stanza also alludes, I shall be returning in due course.

<sup>29</sup> On the *artificium* see above Worstbrock, *Wiedererzählen und Übersetzen*, passim, and Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion*, passim.



The only respect in which Walter clearly deviates from the structure of his source is by adding the episode of the Isle of the Three Choirs from the *Navigatio* (ch. 17). At the beginning of the relevant passage (st. 154–70), he explains and justifies his procedure:

|                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>In Latini textitur</i>  | <i>textus exemplari</i>          |
| <i>Hic sortita seriem</i>  | <i>serii res clari.</i>          |
| <i>Rem a piis rithmice</i> | <i>petor hanc effari,</i>        |
| <i>Pie piis obsequi</i>    | <i>non est ociari. (st. 154)</i> |

(In the copy of the Latin text [i.e. the *Navigatio*] at this place a chapter of serious matter is interwoven, having chosen [for itself] its place in the narrative. I am requested by the pious to tell this matter in rhythmical verse, [and] compliance with the wishes of the pious should not be delayed.)

We see that Walter and his audience were sufficiently familiar with both the *Navigatio* and with Benedeit's *Voyage* to notice even small differences in the number of episodes. It was at his pious listeners' (*pii*) request that Walter added the episode, perhaps at a later stage of composition. Such a thorough research into sources and their combination may also have been motivated by the author's wish for completeness which likewise characterises Walter's major epic, the *Alexandreis*.<sup>30</sup>

Scrupulous treatment of the sources is, however, counteracted by a remarkable insouciance in minor matters of content and detail. As early as in the Prologue, Walter makes light of any concern for the story's veracity: the responsibility for truth rests entirely with the author of the *Navigatio*, with Benedeit and Walter's patron. Whether the critics of the Brendan legend are justified in their scepticism<sup>31</sup> Walter apparently wants to leave undecided. Barely concealing a sense of irony, he admits to lack of knowledge. His decisive argument in favour of the story's truth is that of divine omnipotence, since God can accomplish everything. The irony is patent:

<sup>30</sup> Cf. H. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied Walters von Châtillon*, Halle (Saale) 1905, repr. Hildesheim 1969, 102–164; C. Wiener, *Proles vaesana Philippi totius malleus orbis*, München and Leipzig 2001, 19–32.

<sup>31</sup> Medieval intellectuals were obviously as sceptical of the Brendan legend as were later the Reformers and the Bollandists. One example will suffice: the anonymously preserved satirical poem *Hic poeta qui Brendani uitam uult describere*, ed. P. Meyer, 'Satire en vers rythmiques sur la légende de saint Brendan', *Romania*, 31 (1902), 376–79; D. R. Howlett, *The English Origins of Old French Literature*, Dublin 1996, 112–18.

|                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Sic uetustas precinens</i> | <i>est exemplar rei:</i>       |
| <i>Si falluntur, nescio,</i>  | <i>derogantes ei.</i>          |
| <i>Scio, cum hoc nesciam,</i> | <i>supra posse uehi,</i>       |
| <i>Posse plus insolita</i>    | <i>potestatem Dei. (st. 9)</i> |

(Thus, chanting antiquity [i.e. Benedeit's poem] is the model of the subject-matter: I do not know whether those depreciating the story are mistaken. I know, though I cannot really know it, that God's omnipotence transcends all power and effects things beyond that which is impossible [Matthew 19:26]).

Walter exhibits the same ironical distance with regard to the *scaltae*, fruits otherwise unknown, that Brendan and his monks receive on the Isle of the Three Choirs by way of provisions:

|                                   |                                             |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>Loco leto placidi</i>          | <i>fructus applausere</i>                   |
| <i>Scalte dicti (quid sit id,</i> | <i>dicant, qui nouere!). (st. 158, 1–2)</i> |

(This happy place was cheered by pleasant fruits, called *scaltae* (what they are, those should say who know it!)).

Obviously, the mysterious *scaltae* could not be explained by means of twelfth-century lexicography. Therefore, mockingly and ironically, Walter leaves their explanation for specialists to find, implying that there could be neither fruits nor specialists.<sup>32</sup>

Primarily occupied with the *artificium* of poetic language, Walter pays little attention to the correctness and coherence of his *materia*, as is shown in some minor mistranslations and inconsistencies of the narrative. I will confine myself to one prominent example: the fate of the three intruding monks.<sup>33</sup> As we already know, in the *Navigatio* the first monk, having confessed his sins, dies in the Uninhabited City (ch. 6–7), the second remains happily on the Isle of the Three Choirs (ch. 17) and the third, being a sinner, is dragged by the devils into Hell's mouth which is located on the Fiery Mountain (ch. 24). Since Benedeit omits the whole episode of the Isle of the Three Choirs, he has to substitute a new one to deal with the fate of the second monk: after Brendan's conversation with Judas Iscariot, Benedeit makes the last monk disappear without leaving a trace (*Voyage* 1499–1510). In restoring the episode of the Isle of the Three Choirs from the *Navigatio*, Walter still retains, by mistake or negligence it

<sup>32</sup> In this Walter seems to have been right, see A. Harvey and J. Power, 'Hiberno-Latin *scaltae*', *Ériu*, 48 (1997), 277–79.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Waters, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St. Brendan*, cxxi.

seems, the disappearance of the last monk added by Benedeit. Therefore, in Walter's poem, although only three latecomers join Brendan's party, the fate of four monks is told in the course of the narrative.

### 3.3. *The poet's artificium*

Since both the *materia* and the *dispositio* of Walter's poem are taken virtually unchanged from Benedeit's *Voyage*, the two texts agree almost entirely in content, structure, and plot, notwithstanding the above-mentioned restitution. Consequently, Walter's merits do not lie in a change of subject-matter but more specifically in a fresh poetical treatment of a given *materia*. In order to understand this *artificium*, as it is called in medieval poetics, we need to find out how Walter retells and recasts Benedeit's version, especially what he adds, omits or changes. For such an inquiry, let us now turn to Walter's quotations of, and allusions to, classical and contemporary writers.

It is the poets Vergil and Ovid whose works hold pride of place in the school-poetry of the Latin Middle Ages. Walters's numerous references to them are either by quotation of set phrases without a substantial link, or by allusion to a classical text, evoked more or less explicitly to provide the background. To the first group belong coined phrases such as *date uela uento* (st. 265, 4, after Vergil *Aen.* 4, 546 [etc.] *rursus aquam pelago et uentis dare uela iubebo?*), in addition to rather unusual and exquisite expressions. On one occasion Walter uses the periphrasis *maris purgamenta* (st. 260, 1), found only twice in the work of the Roman historian Curtius Rufus (*Historiae Alexandri magni* 8, 9, 19; 9, 10, 10), where it denotes pearls (*margaritae*) yielded by conches. Walter by contrast makes use of this rare phrase to translate Benedeit's *marin werec* (1577), i.e. the seaweed collected by the otter for Paul the Hermit. Such quotations reveal the wide range of Walter's reading as well as his preoccupation with Latin style.

Still more interesting are the allusions which point to an older text, thus evoking a wider context. One example will illustrate this procedure, aptly called 'background-style' (*Hintergrundstil*) by Walter Berschin.<sup>34</sup> At the very moment when Brendan and his fourteen

<sup>34</sup> W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1986, 70–74.

elected monks board their ship, three intruding monks approach him, asking to be taken along on the journey (st. 41–43). They appeal to Brendan's paternal *pietas* and claim that, being only three, they would be but a slight burden to his ship:

|                                 |                                               |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <i>Eiulant ex littore</i>       | <i>manibus protentis:</i>                     |
| <i>'Et nos, pater, suscipe!</i> | <i>Peccas, si dissentis!</i>                  |
| <i>Pater, natos respice</i>     | <i>uultibus paternis:</i>                     |
| <i>Parua sumus sarcina,</i>     | <i>tantum tres, ut cernis!</i>                |
| <i>Non paternus pater es,</i>   | <i>si nos tuos spernis,</i>                   |
| <i>Si nos tuos reicis,</i>      | <i>conferens externis!'</i> (st. 41, 3–42, 4) |

(They cry from the shore, their hands stretched out: "Even us, Father, you shall take on! You would be sinning, if you refused! Father, look on your children with paternal love: we are but a small burden, only three, as you see! You would be an unfatherly father, if you were to despise us, your own ones, and to reject us in preference to outsiders!")

Special light is shed on this speech by two quotations from Ovid's *Heroides*,<sup>35</sup> which are more than the casual adaptation of a *purpureus pannus*. The monks' address to Brendan, *Pater, natos respice uultibus paternis* (st. 42, 1), is a quotation from Medea's letter to Jason, where she reminds him of their children:

*Si tibi sum uilis, communis respice natos;*  
*saeuiet in partus dira nouerca meos.* (Ov. *epist.* 12, 187–8)

(If I am cheap in your eyes, be kind to our common offspring; a hard stepdame will be cruel to the fruitage of my womb.)

In Ovid's third letter, Briseis, still in the possession of Agamemnon, writes to Achilles, who is about to leave the Greek army. Briseis vividly describes her reaction to the news of Achilles's impending departure: blood and life have left her heart, she wants to die, rather than remain without Achilles in Agamemnon's tent. Should Achilles really sail to his native country, she continues, then she would only be a slight burden to his fleet:

*Si tibi iam reditusque placent patriūque Penates,*  
*non ego sum classi sarcina magna tuae.* (Ov. *epist.* 3, 67–68)

(If it please you now to return to the hearth of your fathers, I am no great burden to your fleet.)

<sup>35</sup> All quotations are taken from *Ovid, Heroides and Amores with an English Translation*, ed. G. Showerman, rev. by G. P. Goold, Cambridge (Mass.) 1986.

With the quotation *Parua sumus sarcina, tantum tres, ut cernis* (st. 42, 2) Walter evokes both the situation of Briseis in view of her definite separation from Achilles and the act of supplication itself. The Ovidian context now provides the background to the scene of the three intruding monks. Such an evocation, creating an invisible bond between the two texts, clothes the supplication of the three monks in classical robes: Briseis's love for Achilles gives the monks' love for their abbot a new, hitherto unknown dimension.

But there is a second poem of Ovid's to which Walter may be alluding here,<sup>36</sup> not as an alternative source, I think, but, given Walter's astonishingly wide range of reading, as a simultaneous one. In *Tristia* 1, 3 Ovid describes his painful separation from Rome and his wife in words reminiscent of Briseis's letter quoted above. Ovid's wife says to her husband:

*'Non potes auelli. Simul ah! Simul ibimus,' inquit,  
te sequar et coniunx exulis exul ero.  
Et mihi dicta uia est, et me capit ultima tellus:  
accedam profugae sarcina parua rati.'* (Ov. *trist.* 1, 3, 81–84)

("I cannot suffer you to be torn away. Together, together we will go; I will follow you and be an exile's exiled wife. For me too the journey has been commanded, for me too there is room in the faraway land. My entrance will add but a small freight to your exile ship.")<sup>37</sup>

Walter, albeit translating Benedeit's Old French poem, deliberately avoids vernacular modes of expression. A striking example is provided by the Fight of the Sea-serpents (st. 146–53).<sup>38</sup> In the *Navigatio* (ch. 16) the fight of the beasts is described only briefly. The ghastly appearance of the attacking beast is reflected in one attribute (*immense magnitudinis*) and in a short statement of its behaviour (*que iactabat de naribus spumas*):

[. . .] *Quadam uero die apparuit illis bestia immense magnitudinis post illos a longe, que iactabat de naribus spumas et sulcabat undas uelocissimo cursu quasi ad illos deuorandos. [. . .] At uero cum appropinquasset illis, antecedeabant unde mire altitudinis usque ad nauim, dumtaxat fratres magis ac magis timebant. [. . .] His finitis tribus uersibus, ecce ingens belua ab occidente iuxta illos transibat*

<sup>36</sup> The third occurrence of this phrase in Ov. *epist.* 9, 58 [. . .] *cui caelum sarcina parua fuit* may be excluded from consideration.

<sup>37</sup> Quotation taken from Ovid, *Tristia, Ex Ponto with an English Translation*, ed. A. L. Wheeler, rev. by G. P. Goold, 2nd ed., Cambridge (Mass.) 1988.

<sup>38</sup> On this episode see the contribution by G. S. Burgess in this volume.

*obuiam alterius bestie. Que statim irruit bellum contra illam, ita ut ignem emisisset ex ore suo. [. . .] His dictis, misera belua, que persequabatur famulos Christi, interfecta est in tres partes coram illis, et altera reuersa est post uictoriam, unde uenerat. (Nav. ch. 16)*

(One day there appeared to them a beast of immense size following them at a distance. He spouted foam from his nostrils and ploughed through the waves at a great speed, as if he were about to devour them. [. . .] As the beast came near them he caused waves of extraordinary height to go before him right up to the boat, so that the brothers were more and more afraid. [. . .] After these three pleas asking for deliverance, a mighty monster passed near them from the west going to encounter the beast. He immediately attacked him, emitting fire from his mouth. [. . .] When he had said this the wretched beast that pursued the servants of Christ was cut into three pieces before their eyes. The other returned after his victory to where he had come from.)

Benedeit, in his turn, rewrites this scene in its entirety and expands it with a detailed description of the sea-serpents and their fighting. He moreover imposes a clearly defined structure (897–908 introduction; 909–20 ekphrasis of the sea-serpent; 921–30 Brendan's speech; 931–56 ekphrasis of the fight; 957–62 moral reflection of the author; 963–68 Brendan's concluding speech). In the ekphrasis of the first *marins serpenz* Benedeit employs a whole string of comparisons: the *serpenz* moves faster than the wind, his fire is as hot as flames coming from a furnace, the flame is so huge that the monks are scared to death, its body is immense and it bellows louder than fifteen bulls, at the sight of its sharp teeth 1500 men would be in terror:

*Vers eals veint uns marins serpenz,  
Chis enchaced plus tost que venz.  
Li fus de lui si enbraise  
Cume buche de fomaïse;  
La flamme est grant, escalfed fort,  
Pur quei icil crement la mort.  
Sanz mesure grant ad le cors,  
Plus halt braiet que quinze tors;  
Peril n'i oust fors sul de denz,  
Sil fuissent<sup>39</sup> mil e cinc cenx.  
Sul les undes que il muweit,  
Pur grant turment plus ne stuweit. (vss 909–20)*

<sup>39</sup> On the conjectural reading *fuissent* and its translation see the note by Burgess in: Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, 346 n. 11.

(A sea serpent came towards them, pursuing them more swiftly than the wind. The flames coming from it burned as brightly as firewood in a furnace; the blaze was huge and burning hot, causing them to fear for their lives. The body was extraordinarily large and it bellowed louder than fifteen bulls; its teeth alone would have been a great threat to them, even if there had been fifteen hundred of them in the boat. On the surface, the waves which it churned up were like those created by a great storm.)

Walter, in his retelling, at first tries to match each of Benedeit's statements with a Latin equivalent. In his text, too, a sea-serpent is approaching (147, 1–2 [...] *belua marina*/[...] *situ serpentina*), its immense body as high as a mountain (147, 2 *equans montem corpore*), but then Walter drops Benedeit's comparison of the serpent's swiftness with the wind's and the similes which follow. At the end of the stanza Walter, having completely abandoned his source, leads up to a climax, by stating hyperbolically that the sight of the approaching sea-serpent in itself spells doom for the observer.

|                               |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Fertur eis obuiam</i>      | <i>belua marina,</i>                |
| <i>Equans montem corpore,</i> | <i>situ serpentina,</i>             |
| <i>Vultu iam notabilis,</i>   | <i>eis iam uicina,</i>              |
| <i>Quam uicinam cernere</i>   | <i>par est cum ruina.</i>           |
| <i>Fedus ardor alitus,</i>    | <i>et hyatus oris,</i>              |
| <i>Turpe uallum dencium,</i>  | <i>tonitrus clamoris,</i>           |
| <i>Dicere deficio,</i>        | <i>quanti sint terroris,</i>        |
| <i>Quantum huius deficiat</i> | <i>choors senioris. (st. 147–8)</i> |

(Approaching them is a marine beast, of a body the size of a mountain, snake-like in appearance, so close to them that its face can already be distinguished; to look at it means ruin. The hideous heat of its breath, and its gaping mouth, the foul 'fence of its teeth', the thundering voice, I am unable to express what terror they arouse, how the abbot's company faints at their sight.)

Whereas Benedeit had taken his images and his comparisons from reality, from the everyday experience of his audience (the blaze, the firewood in the furnace etc.), Walter omits them altogether by substituting Latin epic diction. The line *Fedus ardor alitus, et hyatus oris* (148, 1) is almost entirely made up of expressions taken straight from the classics. The end of the line, *hyatus oris*, has been taken from Vergil, who in the *aristeia* of Camilla so describes the hideous head of a wolf, worn by Camilla's adversary Ornytus:<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> I quote from *Virgil, Aeneid VII–XII, Appendix Vergiliana, with an English Translation*,

*cui pellis latos umeros erepta iuuenco  
pugnatori operit, caput ingens oris hiatus  
et malae texere lupi cum dentibus albis* [...] (Verg. *Aen.* 11, 679–81)

(a hide stripped from a steer swathes the warrior's broad shoulders, his head is shielded by a wolf's huge gaping mouth and white-fanged jaws [...])

The words *alitus* [...] *oris*, though not syntactically linked, are supposed to be an echo from Ovid, who uses *anhelitus oris* several times as a verse clause (e.g. in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, *met.* 4, 72 *inque uices fuerat captatus anhelitus oris*, and on other occasions, such as *met.* 5, 617, *ars* 1, 521, *ars* 3, 803).

With the quotation *turpe uallum dencium* (st. 148, 2) Walter places himself within the Homeric tradition. A fact quite astonishing in an age when the Homeric poems were not even read in Latin translation, let alone in Greek. The only poem figuring as Homeric was the widely read *Homerulus (Ilias Latina)*, an epitome of the *Iliad* (1st century AD). Walter presumably found the Latin translation of the famous Homeric metaphor of 'the fence of the teeth' (ἔρκος ὀδόντων) in Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae* 1, 15, 2–4):<sup>41</sup>

[...] *Homerus* [...] *petulantiaeque uerborum coercendae uallum esse oppositum dentium* luculente dixit, ut loquendi temeritas non cordis tantum custodia atque uigilia cohibeatur, sed et quibusdam quasi excubiis in ore positae saepiatur. *Homerica, de quibus supra dixi, haec sunt:* [...] ποῖόν σε ἔρκος φύγεν ἔρκος ὀδόντων.

[...] and the poet [Homer] went on to say, with great aptness, that the teeth form a rampart to check wanton words, in order that reckless speech may not only be restrained by that watchful sentry the heart, but also hedged in by a kind of outpost, so to speak, stationed at the lips. The words of Homer which I mentioned above are these: [...] 'What a word has passed the barrier of your teeth.' (*Ilias* 4, 350])

The foregoing investigation has revealed how Walter, though retaining the structure and subject-matter of his source, uses poetic *artificium*, rooted in the language of the Roman epic, in order to produce an entirely new poem. He replaces Benedeit's visual and realistic images by phrases and words drawn from the works of Vergil and Ovid,

ed. H. R. Fairclough, rev. by G. P. Goold, Cambridge (Mass.) 2000. At another instance Virgil denotes the gaping mouth of a snake as *hiatus* (*Aen.* 6, 576–77): *quinquaginta atris immanis hiatibus Hydra/saeuior intus habet sedem*.

<sup>41</sup> Quotation taken from *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius, with an English Translation*, ed. J. C. Rolfe, vol. 1, Cambridge (Mass.) 1970.



even of Homer. We are no longer facing a 'translation' of Benedeit's poem but a complete substitution of both language and imagery, a procedure called *transstylisation* by Genette.<sup>42</sup>

Since the assumption that Walter was unable to translate Benedeit's poem more literally or accurately seems utterly absurd in view of his masterly command of the Latin language, we may surmise that he did not want to imitate the style and imagery of vernacular poetry. The kind of *transstylisation* embraced by Walter renounces the visual language of the Old French poem, fitting the world and horizon of laymen, to substitute Latin poetic diction, comprehensible only to a small group of learned clerics, the *litterati*. Obviously, all these changes had been made intentionally.

But it should be noted that the foregoing remarks hold true only for some very salient scenes of the *Vita s. Brandani*. In most cases, Walter succinctly paraphrases the story, whereas in some he even follows Benedeit very closely, as in the description of Judas's pains in Hell (st. 210–49) or the Earthly Paradise (st. 289–309). Yet he always avoids a literal translation (*uerbum e uerbo*) of his model.

A similar problem, the relation of Walter's later major work, the *Alexandreis*, to contemporary French vernacular literature has in recent years been discussed by Dorothea Kullmann in a stimulating paper.<sup>43</sup> She states that Walter, being a man of his time and age, is very unlikely not to have undergone the influence of Old French literature, despite his almost perfect imitation of Roman epic. Though Kullmann admits that allusions in the *Alexandreis* to political events and social institutions of the late twelfth century may be due exclusively to Walter's real-life experience, she thinks that she has also found parallels to the *chanson de geste*: e.g. the addition of medieval *reverdie* to the epic periphrasis of time, the hero's auspicious first encounter with his adversary (*le premier colp*), the pseudo-realistic description of battle scenes and the depiction of a helmet adorned with a precious stone (*carbuncle*). Kullmann resumes her findings as follows:<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 315–21.

<sup>43</sup> D. Kullmann, 'Die *Alexandreis* des Walter von Châtillon und die altfranzösische Epik', in: *Internationalität nationaler Literaturen. Beiträge zum ersten Symposium des Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereichs 529*, ed. U. Schöning, Göttingen 2000, 53–72; a partly developed version of this article is D. Kullmann, 'Gautier de Châtillon et les chansons de geste françaises', in: '*Plaist vos oïr bone cançon vallant?*' *Mélanges offerts à François Suard*, vol. 1, Lille 1999, 491–501.

<sup>44</sup> Kullmann, 'Die *Alexandreis* des Walter von Châtillon', 70: 'Von einer intendierten

There is nothing [in Walter] which proves to be a deliberate imitation of the *chanson de geste*, aiming at recognition. I had to have recourse to single minor details of the battle scenes to show this dependance, while there are parallels to Vergil, Lucan, Statius or Ovid in abundance.

Walter's retelling of Benedeit permits us to go further and modify Kullmann's results. Apart from some minor anachronisms, Walter's *Vita s. Brandani* can be regarded not as a 'deliberate imitation' but as a *deliberate rejection of both vernacular language and imagery*.<sup>45</sup> It is true that Walter does compose poems in French whenever he wishes to address a wider audience of laymen (e.g. the satire W 13, written in Latin and French), but his abiding love rests with Latin poetry. He writes in the *lingua paterna* of a small educated elite of clerics, students, and scholars whose applause he seeks. This participation in the superior culture of the *litterati* makes him reject the field of vernacular poetry which he felt to be the poetry of illiterate laymen, exalted and powerful though they may be.<sup>46</sup>

#### 3.4. *Contemporary sources*

In rewriting Benedeit, Walter not only draws on classical authors such as Vergil, Ovid and Quintus Curtius Rufus, but also on contemporary poets, the so-called *moderni* of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Instead of employing the hexameter, the heroic verse in use since before Homer, he composes his *Vita s. Brandani* in rhymed Goliardic stanzas (four rhythmical lines of thirteen syllables). Our scant knowledge of the Goliardic stanza suggests that it originated

---

Anlehnung an die *Chansons de geste*, die vielleicht gar auf Wiedererkennung zielte, kann jedenfalls keine Rede sein. Ich habe selbst in den Kampfszenen auf einzelne kleine Details zurückgreifen müssen, um die Abhängigkeit zu beweisen, während einem die Similien zu Vergil, Lucan, Statius oder Ovid unmittelbar und in großer Zahl ins Auge springen.'

<sup>45</sup> Such a conjecture has been put forward in regard of the *Alexandreis* by A. C. Dionisotti, 'Walter of Châtillon and the Greeks', in: *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition*, ed. P. Godman and O. Murray, Oxford 1990, 73–96; see p. 88 on the *Roman d'antiquité*: 'One way to consider Walter's classicism would be as a deliberate challenge and antithesis to this vogue, an assertion of cultural superiority on a comparable scale and ground.'

<sup>46</sup> Cf. H. Grundmann, 'Litteratus illitteratus. Der Wandel einer Bildungsnorm vom Altertum zum Mittelalter', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 40 (1958), 1–65; repr. in: id., *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, Part 3, Stuttgart 1978 (Schriften der MGH, vol. 25, 3), 1–66. On the intellectuals cf. J. Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au Moyen Age*, Paris 1957, repr. 1985.

in the school of Peter Abaelard, since the first example of this stanza is preserved in Abaelard's *Planctus Iacob super filios suos*, probably written at the beginning of the 1130s. The first narrative poem entirely composed in the Goliardic stanza is the *Methamorphosis Golye episcopi* published in the Schools of Paris by a follower of Abaelard between autumn 1142 and Abaelard's death on 21 April 1143. A longer theological poem by Jordanus Fantasma, a pupil of Gilbert of Poitiers, and two single stanzas by Hugh Primas may belong to roughly the same time. Thus, by the very choice of the Goliardic stanza Walter joins the poetry of the *moderni*.

Furthermore, Walter acknowledges a debt to the highly individual style of the famous Parisian teacher Serlo of Wilton, whose influence is conspicuous in some quotations, but especially in the playful and mannered nominalization of adverbs. To cite one example: in the Jasconius episode, the monks sitting on the back of the whale only just succeed in recovering their boat as the whale moves:

*Intrant, set non sine 'uix' et difficultate.* (st. 84, 3)

(they enter, but not without a 'hardly' and difficulty.)

Here Walter clearly alludes to one of Serlo's poems (18, 89 *carus tibi qui sine 'uix' sit?* ('who is dear to you without a 'hardly?', [i.e. without a doubt])). In another passage, Walter borrows the similar expression *absque fere*' (st. 292, 2, 'without an almost' [i.e. certainly]) from the *Ylias* of his contemporary Simon Aurea Capra (written 1153–63).<sup>47</sup>

From Marbod of Rennes and Hugh Primas Walter might have learnt to employ the *uersus intercisi*, virtuoso rhymes that comprise two syllables distributed between two words (e.g. st. 183, 3–4 *de fundo—precium do*). On another occasion Walter quotes a well-known *sententia* from Hildebert of Lavardin's *Vita beate Marie Egiptiace*, already regarded as a modern classic in the twelfth century. Evidently, Walter is familiar with the *Floridus Aspectus*, an early collection of poems by the Reims poet Peter Riga (or *Petrus Remensis*). Above all it is Peter's

<sup>47</sup> Serlon de Wilton. *Poèmes latins*, ed. J. Öberg, Stockholm 1965; Simon Aurea Capra *Ylias* 9–10 *Plus ferus ille fero, plus urso, plusue leone; sic fuit absque 'fere' plus ferus ille feris* (PL 171, 1447–51, the quotation 1447 D; here falsely attributed to Hildebert of Lavardin); on this stylistic device cf. C. Wollin, 'Sine vix und absque fere: Ein Beitrag zum Manierismus in der lateinischen Dichtersprache des 12. Jahrhunderts' (in preparation).

*Vita s. Eustachii* (*Flor. Asp.* A 74) that Walter takes as a model from which he cites purple patches in both his *Vita s. Brandani* and his *Vita s. Alexii*. Although Walter follows his model Benedeit quite closely in his detailed ekphrasis of Paradise, some stylistical devices suggest the additional influence of Peter's famous *Descriptio cuiusdam nemoris* (*Flor. Asp.* A 19).<sup>48</sup>

Ever since Ernst Martin's 1873 edition of the *Vita s. Brandani* it is well established that Walter has largely amplified the brief enumeration of the twelve gems adorning the walls of Paradise that Benedeit had taken from the Book of Revelation (21:18–21). This enumeration Walter expands into an ekphrasis of 44 lines (st. 278–88), combining the description of precious stones in Isidore's *Etymologiae* and Marbod's *Liber lapidum*. Walter excerpts forty-eight species from both sources, thereby arbitrarily changing their order. His description of the single stones is abbreviated in such a way that the result is an enigmatic expression comprehensible only to the *lector eruditus*, the connoisseur familiar with the original.<sup>49</sup> The famous carbuncle is described as follows:

*Noctis sol carbunculus,                    decus Trogodite.* (st. 280, 3)

(Carbuncle [is] the night's sun, the Troglodyte's ornament.)

This very verse condenses eight lines from Marbod's *Liber lapidum*, which makes the carbuncle out to shine in the dark and to be found in Libya by the Troglodytes (cave dwellers):<sup>50</sup>

*Ardentes gemmas superat carbunculus omnes,  
nam uelut ignitus radios iacit undique carbo,  
nominis unde sui causam traxisse uidetur.  
Sed Greca lingua lapis idem dicitur anthrax,*

<sup>48</sup> Compare Walter's st. 183, 4 with Marbod *carm.* I 59, 7 (ed. princ. *carm.* 26, 7; PL 171, 1685 C); Hildebert's *Vita* 51–53 (PL 171, 1323 C) is quoted in st. 34, 3; the imitations of Peter Riga will be recorded in my forthcoming edition of the *Floridus Aspectus*; in st. 296–98 Walter uses the rhetorical figure of *diuisio*, a favourite of Peter Riga, e.g. *Descriptio cuiusdam nemoris*, (PL 171, 1235–38 *De ornatu mundi*).

<sup>49</sup> This is exactly the same kind of *abbreviatio* and description that we shall meet again in Walter's ekphrasis of Stateira's tomb, where the Jewish artist Apelles had engraved stories from the Old Testament (*Alex.* 4, 176–274); cf. N. Adkin, 'Walter of Châtillon: 'Alexandreis' IV 206–207', *Mittelaltinisches Jahrbuch*, 32/1 (1997), 29–36.

<sup>50</sup> The (slightly corrected) text and its translation are from *Marbode of Rennes' (1035–1123) De Lapidibus*, ed. J. M. Riddle, Wiesbaden 1977, 62; an older edition is found in PL 171, 1754 A–B.

*huius nec tenebre possunt extinguere lucem,  
 quin flammās uibrans oculis micet aspicientum.  
 Nascitur in Libia, Tragoditarum regione,  
 et species eius ter tēte tresque feruntur.* (vss 341–48)

(The Carbuncle eclipses by its blaze all shining gems, and casts its fiery rays like to the burning coal; whence comes its name, among the Greeks as Anthrax known to fame. Not e'en by darkness quenched its vigour tires; still at the gazer's eye it darts its fires; a numerous race, within the Lybian ground twelve kinds by mining Troglodytes are found.)

But what is the purpose of Walter's sumptuous ekphrasis? It has no apparent function within the narrative, as neither the guiding angel nor Brendan himself employ the gems or their virtues; they do not even look at them. The passage, on the contrary, seems to suggest a direct appeal to the listener or reader: "Look, there is my poem. Can you solve the riddles? You may succeed or not in solving them, still you will have to admire my skill and virtuosity." The real purpose of Walter's ekphraseis, both here in the *Vita s. Brandani*, and later in the *Alexandreis* (2, 494–539 the shield of Darius; 4, 176–274 the tomb of Stateira; 7, 379–430 the tomb of Darius), lies in the wish to show off his skill as a poet and scholar and thereby to astonish and impress the reader. Being proud of his own artistic achievement, Walter tries to win the attention and admiration of his audience. In our case, the ekphrasis is surely aimed at Pope Alexander, conveying the author's unspoken wish for remuneration and promotion.

But Walter is equally well acquainted with the thinking and writings of Bernard of Clairvaux and of other Cistercian authors. At the point where he mentions Brendan's election as abbot of his monastery, Walter writes—wholly independently of Benedeit:

|                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Abbas iam de monacho,</i>     | <i>mater fit in patre:</i>        |
| <i>Patris ei grauitas,</i>       | <i>amor dignus matre,</i>         |
| <i>Patrem matre temperans,</i>   | <i>imperabat grate.</i>           |
| <i>Sic, qui fratres regitis,</i> | <i>patres, imperate!</i> (st. 16) |

(From a monk he already becomes an abbot, a mother in the father: he has the gravity of a father, the love worthy of a mother, he restrains the father with the mother, thus he commands with grace. In this way, you, fathers, commanding the brethren, should command!)

The insistence that the abbot should care for his monks as a mother does for her children, albeit traditionally linked to earlier Benedictine

thought, is re-emphasised in the twelfth century by Bernard and Cistercian writings.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.5. *Ancients and moderns*

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Uana uanis garriat</i>    | <i>pagina pagana,</i>              |
| <i>Greges, agros, prelia</i> | <i>uox Virgiliana,</i>             |
| <i>Mundi dilectoribus</i>    | <i>placeant mundana:</i>           |
| <i>Alexandri studia</i>      | <i>pia sint, non uana! (st. 1)</i> |

(The pagans' page shall prattle on vain subjects to vain people, Vergil's voice [shall sing] of flocks, fields and fights, worldly things shall please the world's paramours: [but] Alexander's interests shall be pious, not vain!)

With proud words Walter commences his poem. In this introductory topos, which opposes the pagan poetry of Antiquity to Christian poetry, Vergil, the greatest of Roman poets, is chosen to represent Paganism. In trying to imitate and even outdo him Walter shows a remarkable measure of self-confidence and pride.<sup>52</sup> That same pride we shall find later in the Prologue to the *Alexandreis*, where Walter emphasises that he is about to treat a *materia* that had eluded even the poets of the ancient world (ll. 34–36):<sup>53</sup> [. . .] *et altitudinem materie, quam nullus ueterum poetarum teste Seruio ausus fuit aggredi perscribendam* [. . .] ('[. . .] and the loftiness of the material, which, as Servius attests, none of the ancient poets dared undertake for a thorough treatment'). A few lines earlier, however, Walter, possibly tongue in cheek, had acknowledged Vergil's superiority (ll. 19–23): *Non enim arbitror me esse meliorem Mantuano uate, [. . .] quem, dum uiueret, nemo potuit equiparare mortalium* ('Indeed, I hardly think myself superior to the bard of Mantua [. . .] one whom none among mortals equaled while he lived').

We do not know for certain why Walter in his *Vita s. Brandani*, as well as in his other Saints' Lives (*Alexis*, *Thomas Becket*), chose the

<sup>51</sup> Cf. C. B. Walker, *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Berkeley 1982, 110–69.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, Tübingen and Basel 11th ed. 1993, 477–78; English transl. by W. R. Trask, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Princeton (NJ) 1990, here pp. 485–86 ('The poet's pride').

<sup>53</sup> M. L. Colker, ed., *Galeri de Castellione Alexandreis*, Padova 1978 (Thesaurus Mundi, 17); English translation by D. Townsend, *The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon*, Philadelphia 1996.

modern Goliardic stanza which in the Parisian Schools had already been in favour for some twenty years. Perhaps he felt inferior to Vergil in the realm of metrical poetry and accordingly chose rhythmic verse, unknown to the Mantuan, to show off his own skill. But at the same time this deliberate change of metre reveals the self-confidence of a new age: it characterises the *modernus* who wants both to distinguish himself from the worshipped *antiqui*, and to rival, if not equal or even surpass them.

Surely, it is with this very intention that Walter describes his 'translation' as *scriptum uetus renouo* (st. 8, 3), the verb *renouare* expressing the modern poet's ability to treat old matter in a new manner. This concept Walter shares with many of his contemporaries, who indulge in using words like *reformare*, *renouare* and *renasci* in relation to religious, political, natural, but above all cultural and literary, renewal. And yet it seems rash to read into these scattered sayings a coherent programme enunciated by the *moderni*.<sup>54</sup>

The self-confidence of the *modernus* finds expression in a masterly command of Latin poetry and a thorough knowledge of the *auctores*. In this sense, Walter's poems stand for the culture of an elite, equally steeped in Holy Scripture, the works of the Fathers and in ancient poetry,—an elite that in the words of Jacques Le Goff constitutes the 'intellectuals of the Middle Ages'.<sup>55</sup> Teachers and students of the schools and growing universities collected, systematically arranged and multiplied the wealth of knowledge inherited from Antiquity to an extent that went far beyond the modest needs of monks and priests. In Walter's *Vita s. Brandani* we find the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Sevilla, who wrote at the close of Antiquity, along with Marbod of Rennes's *Liber lapidum*, which was to remain the standard reference work on the virtues and powers of precious stones down to modern times. Frequent quotations from, and allusions to, Holy Scripture and to Roman poets are complemented by the writings of modern authors such as Hildebert of Lavardin, Serlo of Wilton, Simon Aurea Capra, Peter Riga or the famous Hugh Primas. The *moderni* are by Walter's time admitted without reserve to equality with the *antiqui*. This is not least confirmed by the fact that Walter

<sup>54</sup> Cf. G. B. Ladner, 'Terms and Ideas of Renewal', in: *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R. L. Benson and G. Constable, Cambridge (Mass.) 1982, repr. Toronto 1991, 1–33 with further literature.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au Moyen Age*, passim.

turns to a contemporary work, related to the popular *matière de Bretagne*, as a model.

In spite of repeated, not altogether serious, professions of his own inability (st. 4, 4 *tantillus*; 5, 4 *Ausum talem talia possum me mirari* etc.) Walter proves to be a *modernus* himself, who takes pride in his own skill and the literary achievements of his time, who is confident that his works will stand comparison with those of the *antiqui*, even of Vergil. In this sense Walter's opening stanza perfectly illustrates the view of Ernst Robert Curtius:<sup>56</sup>

The contrast between the 'modern' present and Pagan-Christian Antiquity was felt by no century so strongly as by the twelfth. The concept of the twelfth-century Renaissance, which Haskins has made current, is valid. But the fact becomes apparent only when one inquires into the period's own conception of its place in history; and this has not hitherto been done.

Though a number of scholars in the tradition of Curtius have treated the concept of *modernus* in the Middle Ages, as expressed mainly in medieval historical writing, to this day no comparable treatment of *modernitas* in Latin poetry has been undertaken, as Paul Gerhard Schmidt has recently remarked.<sup>57</sup> We still do not know in what way the Latin poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries felt or declared themselves to be *moderni*, and in what way their writings exhibit the characteristics of *modernitas*. In this field much work remains to be done.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to deal with three texts which essentially relate the same story, with little change made to either plot, structure or characters. All three appeal to the listener's or reader's

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, 260 (English translation 254–55): 'Den Gegensatz zwischen 'moderner' Gegenwart und heidnisch-christlichem Altertum hat kein Jahrhundert so stark empfunden wie das zwölfte. Der Begriff der 'Renaissance des 12. Jahrhunderts', der durch Haskins eingebürgert worden ist, besteht zu Recht. Das wird aber erst dann deutlich, wenn man nach der geschichtlichen Selbstauffassung der Epoche fragt, was bisher nicht geschehen ist.'

<sup>57</sup> P. G. Schmidt, *Das Interesse an mittellateinischer Literatur*, Freiburg (Schweiz) 1995 (Wolfgang Stammerl Gastprofessur für Germanische Philologie, Vorträge Heft 3), 15–21.



spiritual edification by telling about God's creation, set before his eyes in the marvels of the western Ocean, the lives of monks on deserted islands and the unshaken faith of St Brendan. But in writing afresh on their cleaned parchment the authors end up creating three different tales with three different pictures of the tales' performance. A perusal of the palimpsests enables the modern reader to gain a closer understanding of the text, by making him catch a glimpse of the original performance and its medieval audience. The *Navigatio* might be imagined as being recited aloud in the refectory of a monastery, Benedeit's *roman d'aventure* in the halls and chambers of the English king, Walter's epic poem before the members of an intellectual elite serving at the pope's curia.

But for readers of all ages, both ancient and modern, the words of John H. Fox<sup>58</sup> remain true: the Story of Saint Brendan is 'a tale of mystery and imagination which lifts people out of the humdrum of their daily lives, unfolding before their eyes the romantic and colourful spectacle of an Otherworld where dreams and reality converge'.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> J. H. Fox, *A Literary History of France. The Middle Ages*, London 1974, 42.

<sup>59</sup> The fact that my paper resembles English prose style as closely as it does is entirely due to the help of my friend Carl H. Paußmeyer, Melle, who also taught me the importance of the tiger's fur.



EIN HÜBSCH LIEBLICH LESEN VON SANT BRANDON:  
A LOOK AT THE GERMAN PROSE VERSIONS  
AND THEIR ILLUSTRATIONS

Karl A. Zaenker

Thanks to the invention of the printing press, the story of Saint Brendan's sea voyage achieved a short-lived but widespread popularity among German speakers between the seventies of the fifteenth century and the institutionalization of the Lutheran Church half a century later. While the Northern German regions saw an abridged translation into Low German of the Latin *Navigatio sancti Brendani* included in a collection of saints' lives intitled *Der Hylligen Levent* (or the Low German *Passional*), which was reprinted several times between 1478 and 1517,<sup>1</sup> the Central and Upper German book market was primarily supplied with printings of the so-called High German *Reise* version of Saint Brendan's travels and tribulations. The differences in concept and narrative structure between the two branches, the *Navigatio* and the *Reise* version, have been amply discussed elsewhere and need not concern us here.<sup>2</sup> The following remarks will be directed entirely to the latter version and will use the protagonist's most frequent German spelling as 'Brandan' or 'Brandon'. The label of *Volksbuch*, which literary historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth century applied to late medieval printed prose works such as the *Reise*<sup>3</sup> is, of course, a misnomer in view of the fact that such expensive incunabula and early prints were out of reach of most common people. The hucksterish title of these Brandan editions reads—with few variants—as follows: *Ein huebsch lieblich lesen von sant Brandon. Was wonders er uff dem moer erfaren hat*, which could be translated as 'a delightful tale of Saint Brandan, pleasant to read, about

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<sup>1</sup> See the introduction to K. Zaenker, *Sankt Brandans Meerfahrt*, Stuttgart 1987, xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> See C. Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint. Sources and Analogues of the Twelfth-Century Voyage of Saint Brendan*, Dublin 2000, ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. R. Benz, *Sanct Brandans Meerfahrt. Das Volksbuch erneuert*, Jena 1927, repr. Dornach 1983.

his wondrous experiences on the ocean'. Moreover, the book's appeal to the well-to-do reading public of its time was greatly enhanced by its illustrations. A look at the transmission of the written text should not ignore the visual component which can also add to our detailed understanding of certain episodes of the narrative. At the same time, through a diachronic comparison of the prints, one might be able to draw conclusions about the connections between printers' shops and their work. It could further help establish a stemmatic framework of the prints which is needed for selecting the best textual readings. Whether this in turn would lead to a better understanding of certain episodes of the story, let alone to a more precise estimation of what the hypothetical original version \*O of the *Reise* branch may have looked like, remains to be seen.

Earlier complaints that Brandan scholarship had neglected the prose versions of the *Reisefassung*<sup>4</sup>—in contrast to the earlier rhymed versions—seem to have had an effect. Over the past twenty years, several text editions have appeared on the German market, together with a number of specific studies.<sup>5</sup> While these publications are important building blocks, they have not yet been put together into a comprehensive critical text edition. Regardless of whether the *Reise* version was modelled after the *Navigatio sancti Brandani* or not, it clearly presents an independent story line with its three major, loosely connected branches: the two rhymed versions in Dutch (C and H) and German (M and N) respectively, plus the prose version (P) of the later fifteenth century, the focus of our study. Version P itself is represented by several texts which, as the philological studies by Dahlberg and Freudenthal plus the recent addition by Hahn have demonstrated,<sup>6</sup> suggest a further tripartite division in this branch.<sup>7</sup> The earliest version, the Gotha manuscript Chart. A 13 (siglum g), contains some of the most archaic, authentic looking readings, some of which are

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<sup>4</sup> Note the remarks by the Swedish Brandan scholars T. Dahlberg and K. F. Freudenthal; see K. F. Freudenthal, 'Ein Beitrag zur Brandanforschung: Das Abhängigkeitsverhältnis der Prosatexte', *Niederdeutsche Mitteilungen*, 29 (1973), 92.

<sup>5</sup> See G. S. Burgess and C. Strijbosch, *The Legend of St Brendan. A Critical Bibliography*, Dublin 2000.

<sup>6</sup> R. Hahn, 'Zur Überlieferung der oberdeutschen Redaktion von "Brandans Reise"', in: *Septuaginta quinque. Festschrift für Heinz Mettke*, ed. J. Haustein and others, Heidelberg 2000, 147–65.

<sup>7</sup> For a stemmatic representation, see W. Haug, 'The little man on a leaf and the two concepts of the *Dutch/German Reise*', in this volume.

shared with the earlier rhymed versions and are different from the three other extant prose manuscripts: the Heidelberg codex Cpg. 60 (siglum h), the Berlin manuscript mgq. 1113 (siglum b), and finally the Munich folio Cod. MS 688 (siglum m).<sup>8</sup>

These manuscript versions of the Brandan prose voyage have received some attention lately, even though the results are somewhat fragmentary. Manuscript g, the 'Gotha', was edited in 1996 by Marie-Louise Rotsaert, along with the Dutch rhymed version C and her own Italian translation.<sup>9</sup> In her annotations the editor lists major variants from the other Brandan manuscripts, as well as from two early prints, and thereby comes closest to offering a critical edition of the P version on a limited scale.<sup>10</sup> The richly-illustrated Heidelberg manuscript (h) was transcribed and translated into modern German (albeit not very accurately) by G. Sollbach in 1987;<sup>11</sup> it is further available in the microfiche edition in Helga Lengenfelder's series *Codices illuminati medii aevi*.<sup>12</sup> The Berlin manuscript b was transcribed and evaluated by Reinhard Hahn as late as 1998.<sup>13</sup> This has left the second hand-coloured manuscript, the Munich codex (m), rather unnoticed so far. Together with the Heidelberg codex it offers a charming, thorough illustration of the Brandan episodes, together with a fairly reliable text, and deserves more attention.

However, the bulk of the text witnesses of the German *Reise* version in prose was made up of a corpus of twenty-four (?) incunabula and early prints produced in various print shops in southern and central Germany between the period of 1476 and 1521. The question mark as to the numbers reflects partly the uncertain fate of some early printings destroyed or removed during or after the last war, and partly the confusion between the two branches. John L.

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<sup>8</sup> The abridged 'London' manuscript (siglum l), a later copy of a print, is clearly of less critical value and will be left aside here.

<sup>9</sup> M.-L. Rotsaert, ed., *San Brandano. Un antitipo germanico*, Roma 1996.

<sup>10</sup> See R. Hahn's critique in 'Zur Überlieferung der oberdeutschen Redaktion von 'Brandans Reise'', in: *Septuaginta quinque*, 147–65, here 158, and W. P. Gerritsen, *Nederlandse letterkunde*, 2 (1997), 168–72.

<sup>11</sup> G. Sollbach, transl., *St. Brandans wundersame Seefahrt*, Frankfurt 1987.

<sup>12</sup> U. Bodemann and K. Zaenker, ed., *Historienbibel/Sankt Brandans Meerfahrt*, München 1993. In my introduction (pp. 13–24) there is also a critique of Sollbach's text edition.

<sup>13</sup> R. Hahn, ed., 'Ein neuer Zeuge der oberdeutschen Redaktion von Brandans Reise', *Daphnis*, 27 (1998), 231–61.

Flood's critical remark 'Nicht einmal die Zahl der Drucke steht fest'<sup>14</sup> could also be applied to the listing by Marie-Louise Rotsaert.<sup>15</sup> Rotsaert goes beyond the earlier enumeration by R. Fay (see note 14) but lists the fragment of a Low-German print by Johann Snell, Lübeck 1481/82, which, however, represents the *Navigatio* branch in the version of the Low German *Passional* (see above).<sup>16</sup> Our following list is based on those by Fay and Rotsaert and follows, wherever possible, the entries of the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* for the incunabula, and of the *VD 16*<sup>17</sup> for the post 1500 prints, and gives their traditional sigla, confusing though they may be, and Fay's numbering in parentheses.

*Incunabula:*

GW 5004 Augsburg: Anton Sorg, c. 1476 (= A1, Fay 1)<sup>18</sup>

Hain 6674 Augsburg: Anton Sorg, c. 1480 (= A2, Fay 9)<sup>19</sup>

Cop. 6675 Augsburg: Anton Sorg, c. 1485<sup>20</sup>

GW 5005 Basel: Michael Furter, 1491 (= b, Fay 2)

GW 5006 Speyer: Konrad Hist, 1496 (= Fay 3)

GW 5007 Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1497 (= a1, Fay 4)

GW 5008 Kirchheim (Nüw Troyga): Mathis Hüpfuff, 1497 (= Fay 5)<sup>21</sup>

GW 5009 Augsburg: Johann Froschauer, 1498 (= a2, Fay 6)

<sup>14</sup> J. F. Flood, review of R. Fay, *Sankt Brandan. Zwei frühneuhochdeutsche Prosafassungen*, Stuttgart 1983, in: *Germanistik*, 88 (1987), 3470.

<sup>15</sup> M.-L., Rotsaert, ed., *San Brandano. Un Antitipo Germanico*, 62–63.

<sup>16</sup> The *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, vol. 4, Leipzig 1930, lists this version separately as GW 5012.

<sup>17</sup> *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 1. part, vol. 9, Stuttgart 1987.

<sup>18</sup> The erroneous characterization of this text by *The British Library General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975* (360 vols. London, 1979–87); *Supplements* (6 vols. London, 1987–1988) as 'translation by J. Hartlieb' can be found repeated in various catalogues, e.g. the *Illustrated Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (2nd edition). Equally misleading is the comment 'The text is distinct from the Legend of St Brandan, issued by Sorg with the Historie Herzog Ernst von Bayern' (*Illustrated ISTC*, no ib01073000). In fact, it is one and the same text.

<sup>19</sup> L. Hain, *Repertorium Bibliographicum* [...], 2 vols., Stuttgart 1826–38. We used the copy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Sign. 2° Inc. s.a. 667.

<sup>20</sup> W. A. Copinger, *Supplement to Hain's Repertorium*. [...], part 2, vol. 2, London 1902, 235–91.

<sup>21</sup> An alleged earlier printing by the Strassburg printer Mathis Hüpfuff of 1494 is listed in M. U. Chrisman, *Bibliography of Strasbourg Imprints 1480–1599*, New Haven and London 1982; see Flood, 'review of R. Fay'. However, Hüpfuff worked in Strassburg between 1498 and 1520. His first Brandan print was produced in

GW 5010 Strassburg: Mathis Hüpfuff, 1499 (= S1, Fay 8)

GW 5011 Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1499 (= U1, Fay 7)

*Early prints after 1500:*

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- Strassburg: Mathis Hüpfuff, 1503<sup>22</sup>
- VD 16 H 5700 Ulm: Johann Zainer, 1503 (= U2, Fay 13)
- 
- Augsburg: Johann Froschauer, 1507 (= a3, Fay 14)
- VD 16 H 5701 Augsburg: Hans Sittich, 1508
- VD 16 H 5702 Strassburg: Mathis Hüpfuff, 1510 (= S2, Fay 15)
- VD 16 H 5703 Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1511 (= a4, Fay 17)
- 
- s.l., s.a., 4° (= B)<sup>23</sup>
- VD 16 H 5704 s.l., s.a., s.e., 1511 (= B1)<sup>24</sup>
- VD 16 H 5705 Erfurt: Mathes Maler, 1511 (= e, Fay 16; destroyed by fire, 2004)
- VD 16 H 5706 Erfurt: Hans Knapp [der Ältere], 1513 (= E, Fay 18)<sup>25</sup>
- VD 16 H 5707 Strassburg: Mathis Hüpfuff, 1514 (= S3, Fay 19)
- VD 16 H 5708 Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1517 (= a5, Fay 20)
- VD 16 H 5709 Strassburg: Johann Knoblauch, 1518 (= s, Fay 21)
- VD 16 H 5710 Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1521 (= a6, Fay 22)

Of these, the earliest incunabulum A (Anton Sorg: Augsburg, 1476) has understandably received the most attention in textual studies. It is readily available in a facsimile reprint by E. Geck (see note 22) and in a text transcription by R. Fay (see note 14). Besides this, an annotated facsimile edition of the 1496 incunabulum of Konrad Hist of Speyer is on the market with a modern German translation.<sup>26</sup> As mentioned, no overall text version, one that would take into account

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Kirchheim, or 'Nüw Troyga', close to Strassburg, in 1497. The wrong attribution is due to a misreading of the colophon date (my sincere thanks for this information and others to Oliver Duntze of Erlangen University).

<sup>22</sup> This print of 1503 exists as a unicate in the Martinusbibliothek Mainz, signature Inc. 599. It is also mentioned in E. Geck, ed., *Die Seefahrt des Sankt Brandon*, Wiesbaden 1969, 23.

<sup>23</sup> Copy in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz (sign. Yu 440 R), see Rotsaert, ed., *San Brandano*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Possibly a Nuremberg print of c. 1508, either by Hieronymus Hölzel or Georg Stuchs, see Rotsaert, ed., *San Brandano*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Our copy of E, formerly at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz (sign. Yu 436 R), is now at the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow.

<sup>26</sup> L. Unbehaun, ed., *Von Sant Branden eyn hübsch lieblich lesen* [. . .], vol. 1, Rudolstadt 1994.

all existing manuscripts and prints and relate them to each other, has been attempted. The work that Wilhelm Meyer began with his doctoral thesis of 1918 is still waiting to be completed.<sup>27</sup>

For the purpose of a preliminary orientation, the above listed major manuscripts g, h, m and b have been collated and their readings held against those of the earliest six incunabula versions. These are the two first Augsburg prints by Anton Sorg of 1476 and 1480, the later Augsburg print of 1497 by Johann Froschauer, as well as those by Michael Furter of Basel, 1491,<sup>28</sup> Konrad Hist of Speyer 1496 and Johann Zainer of Ulm, 1499 (see above).<sup>29</sup> While the database is too limited for final conclusions on the affiliation of the Brandan prose texts, it appears obvious, nevertheless, that the printed versions offer few, if any textual variants that are significantly different from one another, as Carl Schröder had noted earlier.<sup>30</sup> They are based on the earliest Augsburg prints, which they sometimes reproduce without even correcting the most glaring errors. To give but one example: in the opening sequence where Brandan reads the book about God's wonders on earth and about the antipodean world underneath ours, the first half of the following sentence is omitted in the Augsburg prints of 1476, 1480 and 1497: *'(und wenn es by vnns nacht were) so were es bey yn tag'*.<sup>31</sup> Only the Basel and the Speyer prints complete the sentence logically (and there is no need to postulate a second source), while the others keep the omission mechanically. In a great number of cases the printed versions have their own common readings which set them apart from the manuscript versions. Two brief examples may suffice for this observation: only the prints explicitly give the name of the magnet mountain (*'der selbig stain ist genant Mangnet'*), and only the prints mistakenly state that Brandan

<sup>27</sup> W. Meyer, *Die Überlieferung der Deutschen Brandanlegende. I. Der Prosatext*, Göttingen 1918.

<sup>28</sup> The Basel incunabulum of 1491, usually ascribed to Michel Furter, must be attributed to the Basel printer Jakob Wolff, according to F. Schanze, 'Wer druckte den deutschen "Äsop" (GW 363) und den Basler "Brandan" von 1491 (GW 5005)?', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1998), 105–10. We have retained the traditional designation here.

<sup>29</sup> The earliest two prints by Hüpfuff were not available for examination at this stage.

<sup>30</sup> Carl Schröder in his *Sanct Brandan. Ein lateinischer und drei deutsche Texte*, Erlangen 1871, 'alle diese Drucke sind Abklatsche des ältesten, nur tritt bei einigen das Bestreben hervor, die größten Druckfehler zu verbessern [. . .]' (p. XVI). Schröder had used some thirteen prints for his analysis.

<sup>31</sup> 'When it is night here with us, it is day with them.'



takes along provisions for twelve years rather than nine, even though that was the length of the trip announced by the angel. It is equally clear that the two illustrated manuscripts h and m, along with the closely related Berlin manuscript b, have a great number of common readings that are shared neither by the Gotha manuscript g nor the prints. One example for this is: in h, b and m, the hermit claims to have been on the rock for twenty-nine years, whereas this figure is ninety-nine in g, and one hundred and nine years in all prints consulted. For the editor who wishes to reconstruct the most likely text version of the P original, it would be logical to observe the ‘majority rule’ in cases of significantly different readings, albeit in a non-mechanistic way. Namely: where two of the three branches (i.e. manuscript g, manuscripts h, b and m, and the printed versions)<sup>32</sup> are in concordance with each other, an original reading can be assumed. However, a further comparison with the rhymed versions of M and N would be required to add support to the editor’s emendations or else put them in doubt.

As far as the woodcut illustrations are concerned, one encounters at first glance a uniformity similar to that of the printed texts. The first edition of Anton Sorg set the pattern and the later prints followed suit to a large extent, as our chart (see appendix) will demonstrate. While the two manuscripts h and m take great care in illustrating every episode of the Brandan narrative and thereby arrive at a total number of 33 hand-drawn, coloured pictures, the incunabula versions select only a few scenes, between 15 and 20, for their woodcuts (not counting the occasional duplicates). These illustrations do not always correspond to the chapter division found in the text or used in recent studies.<sup>33</sup> Which episodes then were chosen by the book-printer for an illustration, and which were passed over? Interestingly enough, the framework of the story is not visually depicted in most incunabula, namely the opening scene of Brandan’s reading and his subsequent burning of the book of wonders at the outset, and in the final scene, after his return from the voyage, his submission of his own newly-written book of wonders on the altar of his church. In the two illustrated manuscripts h and m, by contrast, this motif is of paramount importance (#1, 2 and 33 on our

<sup>32</sup> This corresponds to sigla  $\alpha$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $\gamma$  in Rotsaert’s *stemma codicum*, p. 65.

<sup>33</sup> Most convincing in Strijbosch’s *Seafaring Saint*, 12–26 (see note 2).

chart = visual **examples no. 1, 2 and 6**) as it encapsulates the message of the story: blessed are they who, unlike Brandan, believe without seeing. Among the incunabula visited, only the Basel print of 1491 shows a reading Brandan with his monks (= **ex. 7**), while the Speyer print of 1496 contains a book reading and book burning illustration (= **ex. 8**). The latter exists also in the Strassburg print of 1499 by Mathis Hüpffuff (GW 5010)<sup>34</sup> where it depicts a ritual public book burning rather than Brandan's private act of disbelief: there are several volumes on the flaming pyre and Brandan as the public executioner throws in the heretical book in front of the onlooking monks (= **ex. 9**). Not by coincidence, the 1513 print by Hans Knapp of Erfurt shows a very similar opening scene which then is repeated with minor changes at the very end of the book, underneath the colophon.<sup>35</sup> With the greater availability of printed works the practice of book-burning by secular and church authorities intensified as well, as did the protest against that violent repression.<sup>36</sup> In general, though, one can conclude that most of the incunabula and early prints do not adequately render the religious-didactic message of the opening and the concluding scenes in visual terms. The original meaning of the Brandan *Reise* seems not sufficiently understood, even though the neutral angels in their hideous animal shape enunciate it very clearly: "*Nun sag ich dir Brandon du wilt nit glauben wann was du siehst und des doch wol wayst das hat dich pracht in grosse arbeyt/wann du hast ein pûch verprant das die gantzen warheyt sagt Und du müst darumb in disez ellendt yetzo wandlen und sôlichs erfahren unnd sehen Darumb sind die vil weyßser die do gelaubent das got vil grösser unzâlicher wunder getan habe und gethûn mag und nichtz zû thûn unmüglich ist [. . .]*"<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The picture is taken from Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> The poor quality of our copy ruled out a reproduction here. Furthermore, we did not extend our investigation to the post 1500 prints at this stage.

<sup>36</sup> See H. Rafetseder, *Bücherverbrennungen. Die öffentliche Hinrichtung von Schriften im historischen Wandel*, Wien 1988, 142.

<sup>37</sup> "Now I say to you, Brandon, you only want to believe what you see and what you know well. This has got you in great trouble because you burnt a book that says nothing but the truth. That's why you have to journey into this unknown world now and experience and see it for yourself. Therefore those are much wiser who believe that God has done and can still do many great marvels without number and that nothing is impossible to Him." Our translation follows partly that of W. P. Gerritsen and Clara Strijbosch, 'The German Version', in: W. R. J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of Saint Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2002, 131–53 and 348–49, here 148. Gerritsen and Strijbosch used the Gotha manuscript as their source.

A lengthy text passage without any woodcuts occurs in the chapter of the monks' visit to 'Bona Terra' (Earthly Paradise), in our chart represented by five pictures (#21 to 26) in the two manuscripts. Perhaps the lack of dramatic events, and the detailed verbal description of the idyllic and wondrous scene, did not call for any extra illustrations in the printer's mind. It comes as a surprise, though, that the dramatic encounter with the neutral angels is depicted only in the Speyer print, as we will discuss later. What can be found in all of the prints are repeated giant fish pictures (#5 and 27 = **ex. 10**), scenes with devils dragging a person away (#12 and 13), shipwrecks and drownings in the treacherous 'Lebermeer' (#14 = **ex. 11**), the tortured souls of the damned (#20 = **ex. 12**), and lonely figures on a rock or in the sea (#9, 17). A prominent visual role is given to the mermaid's repeated appearance. The text calls first for the threatening emergence of a hairy sea-monster, half-man, half-fish, a creature that matches the description of a *monacus marinus* in Konrad von Megenberg's *Buch der Natur*<sup>38</sup> or of the so-called *serra* sea-monster.<sup>39</sup> And yet, all but the Speyer incunabulum (= **ex. 13**) insert pictures of a well-endowed nude mermaid instead (#6 = **ex. 14**). The first Augsburg print erroneously set in here the very similar image of a singing siren who puts the monks and sailors to sleep. This illustration, however, was earmarked for the later scene 'Encounter with a Siren' (#15), and this obvious mix-up is corrected in the following Augsburg editions of 1480 and 1497. The mermaid picture must have been considered a drawing-card by the printers, hence its function as a title-picture for the Froschauer print of 1497 and its repetition independent of the story plot (#8). It represents quite a crude contrast to the elegantly dressed courtly mermaid in the coloured drawings of manuscripts m and h. In all these images the siren wears a crown which denotes her as the 'Queen of the Seas' of the Apollonius of Tyre novels popularized in printed prose versions of the fifteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

One may ask whether it was for purely commercial reasons that the woodcut illustrations were chosen and executed in this manner,

<sup>38</sup> Konrad von Megenberg, *Das Buch der Natur*, ed. F. Pfeiffer, repr. Hildesheim 1962, 239.

<sup>39</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, makes a case for it, p. 96.

<sup>40</sup> See detailed summary of this episode in Heinrich von Neustadt, *Apollonius*, ed. J. Strobl, Wien 1875, 24; see also Konrad von Megenberg, *Buch der Natur*, ch. 17 'Von den Merweiben'.

speculation on the readers' enjoyment of explicit and violent scenes? The answer, partly, is yes, but it seems also that there was a preference for simple visual motifs which the printer could re-use in a different context, or duplicate with only slight adaptations, without necessitating extra artistic labour. That means that the specific verbal description of the text was largely ignored in such cases and that the woodcutter produced an easily understood, more schematic picture in accordance with the brief chapter titles.

To give but two examples for this method: the title of the penultimate chapter reads 'Here saint Brandon came to an old man named Haylbran whereby he realized that he had nearly reached home'.<sup>41</sup> The verbal description of this mysterious old man in sumptuous clothing, seated on a mule, is very elaborate. Strijbosch has given a thorough interpretation of this horseman and his name, Haylbran (or Hilsprang/Hildebrand), as 'a figure positioned where strange lands and the known world meet'.<sup>42</sup> And yet, none of these elements are to be seen in our woodcuts (with the exception of that in the Speyer incunabulum of 1496 = **ex. 24**). They show merely an old man with a walking-stick greeting Brandon in front of a church building with Brandon's monks watching from the boat, a common motif throughout the book. It has been mistakenly labelled as the picture of 'Brandon's homecoming' (#32 = **ex. 15**),<sup>43</sup> but the actual return of Brandon to his monastery, his welcome by the remaining monks and the bishop, did not get a woodcut of its own in the first Anton Sorg print of 1476. However, the woodcutter must have produced an illustration for the first part of our episode #11 ('bridle theft' = **ex. 16**) which depicts the monkish bridle thief standing in a church building's doorway in front of his brethren. Since this cut had not been inserted in its proper place in the narrative, it was used now, at the conclusion of Brandon's journey, to mark the homecoming scene, offering a setting which is only vaguely reminiscent of an abbot greeting his brethren. In the second Augsburg print of 1480 this glaring error was corrected, the bridle theft picture was put in its proper place and another final picture was added. It now shows Brandon going up to his cloister, albeit alone (#32 = **ex. 17**), while

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<sup>41</sup> 'Hie kam sant Brandon zu dem Greysen man genant Haylbran darbey er sich erkannte das er schier anhaym kommen was' (see Fay, ed., *Sankt Brandon*, 63).

<sup>42</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 239.

<sup>43</sup> Strijbosch, *Seafaring Saint*, 245.

the text speaks of the joyous and dignified reception by the whole community, which is what we find in the Heidelberg and Munich manuscripts (= **ex. 3**).

There is another faulty depiction in the first Augsburg print and its imitators in the scene where, according to the text, 'a good man' (in other *Reise* versions named Johannes) and a dwarf come to Brandan's rescue in a rowing boat, with the dwarf acting as the ferryman (#29 = **ex. 18**). 'The good man', however, is left out of the boat in all but the Speyer print (**ex. 19**) and the attention is clearly focused on the grotesque figure of the dwarf. We can conclude, then, that the function of the woodcuts was not primarily to translate the verbal description into a detailed image but to give a more general visual stimulation to the reader through an often stereotypical representation and to awaken his curiosity.

A good example for this procedure is the Judas figure on the rock in the sea. His particular clothing ('*do fundent sy einen nackenden man sitzen auff einem weysen stein [...] Nun het er keynen schyrm dann eyn kleynes tuchlein das hieng ym vor den augen*')<sup>44</sup> and his particular suffering, even during his sabbatical respite ('*Dem selben man was der leyb wol halber gefroren von der grossen keltyn [...] An der andern seyten [...] da was ym also hayß und prant in also sere das ym feürin streuß auß seinem leyb giengent und fürent und die flammen schlügen ym über das haubt*'),<sup>45</sup> which are so vividly described in the text are not depicted in the woodcuts. Rather, here he is seen as the 'arch-traitor' with the pointed Jewish hat and the money-bag around his neck, a figure that may reflect (or arouse) anti-Jewish sentiment in the population. In the Augsburg prints, Judas is given a black aureola around his head, a symbol of his ultimate damnation and a striking contrast to the saintly Brandan's halo (#19 = **ex. 20, 21**).

As mentioned before, among the listed incunabula on our chart, only the one by Konrad Hist of Speyer of 1496 chose different motifs for illustration and seems uninfluenced by the Augsburg tradition. In some instances, it inserts pictures where the other prints do not have one, e.g. it gives the opening pictures of Brandan reading a book and of his burning the book (#1 and 2, **ex. 8**); it shows the

<sup>44</sup> 'They found a naked man sitting on a white rock [...]. He had no protection other than a small piece of cloth hanging over his eyes.'

<sup>45</sup> 'His body was half frozen from the great cold [...] his other side was so hot and burning so badly that flames of fire shot out of his body and over his head.'

fight of the dragon and the heavenly stag (#4 = **ex. 22**); the devil on the fiery mountain (#16); and the encounter of Brandan with the threatening neutral angels (#25 = **ex. 23**). Furthermore, the Speyer print gives proof of a far more accurate reading of the text than the other listed prints do. Two examples may suffice: as mentioned, picture #29 (= **ex. 19**) shows both occupants of the rowing boat, the dwarf and the good man, and, finally, #30 = **ex. 24**, where the old horseman, Haylbran/Hilsprang, is given the emblematic attributes he has in the text, namely, a white mule and a bejewelled gown.<sup>46</sup> The same thoughtful, independent approach towards text illustration can be found throughout the Speyer incunabulum. Also the few examples from the already mentioned Strassburg printer Mathis Hüpffuff that we had a chance to view seem to betray an equal attention to textual detail and an even more accomplished artistic expression in his woodcuts than most others. In any case, what should be reiterated is that these interesting variations pertain only to the illustrations and do not have any correspondence in textual variants.

Our illustration chart was compiled initially from the two hand-coloured manuscripts h (Heidelberg) and m (Munich)<sup>47</sup> and our final observations will be directed at them. Both folios were produced in unidentified workshops of the mid fifteenth century, independently from one another, but their many common readings suggest they stem from the same source text. Presumably, that source text would have been illustrated as well, since h and m insert their pictures exactly at the same spots in the text. If the choice of motif and setting is rather similar there are also interesting variations in details and in the general concept.

Firstly, Saint Brandan's book becomes something of a visual *leit-motif* throughout the two manuscripts. Just as the statues and pictures of the saint on votive altars or frescoed walls in Northern Europe often show a book as one of his attributes,<sup>48</sup> so do the coloured drawings here. When Brandan talks to the neutral angels,

<sup>46</sup> These woodcuts were hand-coloured. A few unrelated vignettes depicting seasonal activities, such as harvesting, animal slaughtering, were added for embellishment by Hist.

<sup>47</sup> The facsimile microfiche edition (note 12) offers the complete set whereas only sixteen of the thirty-three illustrations of h are reproduced in G. E. Sollbach's edition (see note 11). The illustrations of the Munich manuscript have not yet been published.

<sup>48</sup> See K. Zaenker, 'St Brendan the Navigator. A *Wanderkult* in Hanseatic Towns around 1500', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 17 (1990), 551–76.

he is depicted as writing down what he hears and sees (#24), and, when he has to take the oar, another monk holds the book prominently for him (#26). In fact, the last visual signal the reader of the manuscripts receives is that of the rewritten book on the altar (#34).<sup>49</sup> Altogether, the didactic intention of the Brandan legend has clearly been translated into images. Secondly, both manuscript illustrators took great trouble to incorporate details of the text. The neutral angels, these hybrid creatures of various beasts and human shapes, stand rather awkwardly on their fish tails which only the manuscript text gives them by mistake (= **ex. 4**).<sup>50</sup> The printed texts do not share this particular text variant. The woodcut in the Speyer print of 1496, the only incunabulum that illustrates this scene, demonstrates this feature: here the creatures stand on two legs and their pig and dog-like shape (the proverbial German ‘*Schweinehund*’?) is explained in typological terms as their divine punishment.

A further significant visual object is the stolen bridle, the symbol of temptation and sin. Since between the bridle theft and the thief’s punishment another episode is narrated, namely the abrupt abduction of a monk into Paradise (#11), the illustration for it depicts the thief with his stolen bridle in his hands witnessing the event. Not only does the devil then drag him away by the bridle (#12), but when the devil has to return the culprit (#13), God Himself takes the *corpus delicti* away in the Heidelberg codex, a symbolic gesture of forgiveness which goes beyond the text (= **ex. 5**).

Finally, an interesting difference in style between the two illustrated manuscripts should be pointed out: whereas manuscript h integrates various elements into one picture,<sup>51</sup> the Munich codex m has

<sup>49</sup> The iconographical evidence would also suggest (like the text itself) that Brandan’s books are identical, i.e. the burnt book and Brandan’s logbook. See C. Strijbosch, ‘Ein Buch ist ein Buch ist ein Buch. Die Kreation der Wahrheit in *Sankt Brandans Reise*, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 131 (2002), 277–89.

<sup>50</sup> ‘[. . .] ain gar Wunderlichs geschlecht die hetten höpter als die schwin vnd hetten hend als die menschen und dar an hundes clauwen vnd hetten hels als die cranch vnd püch als die man vnd warend vnder der gürtel als visch [. . .]’, Cod. Ms. 688 (= m), 252v (‘a very strange race: they had heads like swine, hands like humans but with dogs’ claws, necks like cranes, bellies like men, and below the belt they were like fish’). The printed versions read ‘vnd hetten peüch die warent vnderhalb der gürtel rauch’, and later ‘Auch müssen wir lieb haben als die hundert’ (‘they had bellies that were furry underneath the belt [. . .]. We are sentenced to have bodies like dogs’).

<sup>51</sup> Ulrike Bodemann, ed., *Historienbibel/Sankt Brandans Meerfahrt*, calls this type an ‘Ereignisbild’ (see note 12).

the tendency to split the picture into two halves. These half-pictures can be on opposite pages or in two separate columns. The effect is a clear separation between the wondrous event or creature with which Brendan and his monks are confronted and their reaction to it on the other, complementing picture half. One can see a good example of this in the above-mentioned 'return of the bridle thief' picture. This arrangement makes the reader or onlooker realize that there is a lesson also for him/her. It is a didactic device which produces something akin to a Brechtian 'alienation effect', and in that regard, the Munich manuscript is very successful. The final picture in both manuscripts reinforces the religious message: Brandan's monks are seen from above, celebrating mass with their abbot. They vicariously represent the pious readers of the book, for whom the saint, when called upon, will intercede (#33 = **ex. 6**) as he did with Judas and his own thievish monk.

In conclusion, we have made the case that a future comprehensive text edition of the German *Reise* version of Saint Brandan's Voyage in prose should also give its illustrations a prominent place. A combination of a critical text edition in print and a digitalized series of both the coloured illustrations of the two manuscripts as well as the black and white or coloured woodcuts of the major incunabula might be considered. Accessible on-line, this would replace the microfiche editions or facsimile prints of the past. To have the visual component separated from the text would admittedly not be an ideal solution, but it would certainly be better than ignoring it altogether.<sup>52</sup> Now that another *desideratum*, a reliable translation into English has been fulfilled (see note 37), this should help bring this attractive, entertaining version of the Brandan legend to the attention of students and scholars outside the German language sphere and rekindle *Ein hübsch lieblich lesen von sant Brandon*. After all, we post-modernists share a common theme with our medieval saint: our doubts in the authority of a book and our attempts to (re-)construct a new book. Besides the voyage in circles. . . .

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<sup>52</sup> In the meantime, this *desideratum* has been fulfilled, to a large extent, by a splendid doctoral dissertation by Andrea van Leerdam, *Een boek vol wonderen. Geïllustreerde handschriften en vroege drukken van Sint Brandaans reisverhaal, 13e-16e eeuw*. Utrecht University, 2004 (unpublished), and by its concomitant website <http://terheide.xs4all.nl/brandaan>.



## APPENDIX

|                                            | ms. h<br>Heidelberg | ms. m<br>Munich | 1476<br>Augsburg:   | 1480<br>Sorg                 | 1497<br>Froschauer           | 1491<br>Basel:<br>Furter     | 1496<br>Speyer: Hist         | 1499<br>Ulm:<br>Zainer       |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Brandon<br>reads book                   | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | <b>Title<br/>= #6</b>        | ×                            | <b>(#32)<br/>X</b>           | —                            |
| 2. Brandon<br>burns book                   | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | —                            | —                            | ×                            | —                            |
| 3. Brandon's<br>departure                  | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | —                            | —                            | —                            | —                            |
| 4. dragon<br>and stag                      | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | —                            | —                            | ×                            | —                            |
| 5. forest on<br>the big fish               | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            |
| 6. the sea<br>monster                      | ×                   | ×               | <b>siren</b>        | <b>mermaid</b>               | <b>mermaid</b>               | <b>mermaid</b>               | <b>monster</b>               | <b>mer-<br/>maid</b>         |
| 7. the poor<br>souls at a<br>purgatory     | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | —                            | ×                            |
| 8. B.'s visit<br>with holy<br>monks        | —<br>×              | —<br>×          | <b>mermaid</b><br>— | <b>mermaid</b><br>—          | —<br>—                       | <b>mermaid</b><br>—          | —<br><b>Title #32</b>        | —<br>—                       |
| 9. the hermit<br>on a rock                 | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            |
| 10. paradise<br>castle, walk               | ×                   | ×               | —                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | <b>leaving<br/>boat</b>      | ×                            |
| 11. B.'s monk<br>is taken into<br>paradise | —<br>×              | —<br>×          | —<br>×              | <b>bridle<br/>theft</b><br>× | <b>bridle<br/>theft</b><br>× | <b>bridle<br/>theft</b><br>× | <b>bridle<br/>theft</b><br>— | <b>bridle<br/>theft</b><br>— |
| 12. devil and<br>bridle thief              | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | <b>#10<br/>×</b>             |
| 13. devil<br>brings him<br>back            | ×                   | ×               | —                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            |
| 14. ships<br>stranded in<br>"Klebermeer"   | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            |
| 15. the song<br>of the siren               | ×                   | ×               | <b>mermaid</b>      | ×                            | <b>= #6</b>                  | ×                            | ×                            | <b>= #6</b>                  |
| 16. devil on<br>fire mountain              | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | —                            | —                            | ×                            | —                            |
| 17. hermit on<br>grass mound               | ×                   | ×               | ×                   | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            | ×                            |
| 18. God saves<br>ship from abyss           | ×                   | ×               | —                   | —                            | —                            | —                            | —                            | —                            |

Table (Cont.)

|                                              | ms. h<br>Heidelberg | ms. m<br>Munich | 1476<br>Augsburg:     | 1480<br>Sorg                            | 1497<br>Froschauer                      | 1491<br>Basel:<br>Furter                | 1496<br>Speyer: Hist     | 1499<br>Ulm:<br>Zainer                  |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 19. Judas<br>on his rock                     | ×                   | ×               | ×                     | ×                                       | ×                                       | ×                                       | ×                        | ×                                       |
| 20. Judas<br>taken back<br>to hell           | ×                   | ×               | —<br>souls in<br>fire | —<br>souls in<br>fire                   | —<br>souls in<br>fire                   | —<br>souls<br>in fire                   | —<br>souls in<br>fire    | —<br>souls in<br>fire                   |
| 21. B.'s walk<br>up to castle<br>of paradise | ×                   | ×               | ×                     | = #10                                   | = #10                                   | = #10                                   | bridle<br>theft<br>= #11 | = #10                                   |
| 22. Brandan<br>quietening<br>wild beasts     | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 23. the table<br>of plenty                   | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 24. Brandan<br>writes down<br>wonders        | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 25. neutral<br>angels<br>threatening         | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | ×                        | —                                       |
| 26. neutral<br>angels talk<br>to Brandan     | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 27. Brand.'s<br>boat on<br>giant fish        | ×                   | ×               | ×                     | ×                                       | #6 first<br>×                           | ×                                       | ×                        | ×                                       |
| 28. the dwarf<br>on his island               | ×                   | ×               | (twice)               | (twice)                                 | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | (twice)                                 |
| 29. dwarf<br>and good<br>man in boat         | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 29. dwarf<br>and good<br>man in boat         | ×                   | ×               | dwarf<br>alone        | dwarf<br>alone                          | dwarf<br>alone                          | dwarf<br>alone                          | ×                        | dwarf<br>alone                          |
| 30. old man<br>Haylbran                      | ×                   | ×               | ×                     | ×                                       | ×                                       | ×                                       | ×                        | ×                                       |
| 30. old man<br>Haylbran                      | +mule               | +mule           |                       |                                         |                                         |                                         | +mule                    |                                         |
| 31. return to<br>Ireland                     | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| 32. welcome<br>by bishop<br>and monks        | ×                   | ×               | bridle<br>theft       | Brandan<br>goes to<br>cloister<br>alone | Brandan<br>goes to<br>cloister<br>alone | Brandan<br>goes to<br>cloister<br>alone | = #8<br>(also<br>title)  | Brandan<br>goes to<br>cloister<br>alone |
| 33. B. puts<br>book on altar                 | ×                   | ×               | —                     | —                                       | —                                       | —                                       | —                        | —                                       |
| <i>different<br/>illustrations</i>           | 33                  | 33              | 15                    | 18                                      | 17                                      | 19                                      | 20                       | 16                                      |



Ex. 1 Brandon reads book (Ms. m)



Ex. 2 Brandon burns book (m)



Ex. 3 Brandon's welcome home (m)



Ex. 4 Brandon and the monsters (m)



Ex. 5 Return of the bridle thief (m)



Ex. 6 Brandan's final mass (Ms. h)



Ex. 7 Brandan and monks (Furter)



Ex. 8 Brandan burns the book (Hist)



Ex. 9 Brandan burns books (Hüpuff 1499)



**Ex. 10** The giant fish (Sorg 1480)



**Ex. 11** Shipwreck (Furter)



**Ex. 12** Souls in purgatory (Furter)



**Ex. 13** Sea monster (Hist)



**Ex. 14** Mermaid (Sorg 1480)





**Ex. 15** Old man Haylbran (Furter)



**Ex. 16** Bridle theft (Sorg 1480)



**Ex. 17** Brandan's homecoming (Sorg 1480)



**Ex. 18** Dwarf in a boat (Sorg 1480)



**Ex. 19** Dwarf and good man (Hist)



**Ex. 20** Judas on his rock (Furter)



**Ex. 21** Judas on his rock (Sorg 1480)



**Ex. 22** Fight of dragon and stag (Hist)



**Ex. 23** Neutral angels (Hist)



**Ex. 24** Haylbran on his mule (Hist)



## PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS ON THE SO-CALLED *NAVIGATIO S. BRENDANI*

Michaela Zelzer

### *Preliminary Remarks: Supposed Origins and Aims of the Latin Text*

The title of the so-called *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, the story of Saint Brendan's Atlantic voyage in search of the *Terra Repromissionis*, is given, at least in the older manuscript tradition from the 10th to the 12th centuries, as *Vita s. Brendani*, even though there are different traditions of Lives of Saint Brendan, which are related to our text but by no means identical with it.<sup>1</sup> Concerning Brendan himself, the seafaring abbot's character differs considerably from those of 'normal' saints, as described in their respective lives. From early times, Brendan was considered as 'The Navigator', which to a certain degree he obviously was,<sup>2</sup> and during his voyages he proved himself to be a saint, not by performing miracles but rather by exercising his extraordinary prudence and cleverness and a certain kind of prophecy, linked to his great curiosity and his unshakeable trust in God.

First of all, a few words concerning my personal views on the origins and aims of the Latin text. The story of 'Brendan the Navigator', of Irish origin, was presumably a more or less loosely connected series of adventures of the seafaring abbot and his monastic crew. These adventures took place on the Atlantic Ocean and were related to a search for the 'Promised Land'. They probably reached the Continent in a first Latin version during the invasions of the Vikings,

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<sup>1</sup> 'The precise relationship between the *Vita* and the *Navigatio* traditions is uncertain', G. S. Burgess, 'Introduction', in: W. R. J. Barron and G. S. Burgess, ed., *The Voyage of St Brendan. Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation*, Exeter 2002, 1–11, here 1; cf. also C. Selmer, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1959 (Publications in Medieval Studies, 16), xxxvi, 3; the whole question is discussed at length by G. Orlandi, *Navigatio S. Brendani. I. Introduzione*, Milano and Varese 1968, 9–73 (chs I and II).

<sup>2</sup> 'His name is still placed high on the list of possible discoverers of the New World', Burgess, 'Introduction', in: Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, 1, where Burgess, 7–11 would, however, not place him; on Brendan's travels in and around Ireland and Scotland see *ibid.*, 8.

from the late 8th century onwards. There, it must have very soon encountered the monastic reforms of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious and their efforts to standardise the various forms of Merovingian monasticism, largely based on Franko-Irish traditions, which eventually succeeded in rendering the Rule of Saint Benedict the first and exclusively observed monastic rule within the Frankish empire. In this context, the early version of the story of Saint Brendan might well have been taken as a model for the extant Latin text, which, in my opinion, brought together for didactic purposes the somewhat exotic adventures of the seafaring saint ('Brendan the Navigator') and the ideals of the coenobitic life and prayer, which were widely propagated in Carolingian times ('Brendan the ideal abbot'). Rather strangely at first sight, the actual destination of the journey, the *Terra Repromissionis*, once the monks had reached their goal, was no longer taken seriously. The Carolingian character of the extant Latin text, in so far as it differs from the supposed original story and from the lives of other Irish saints (e.g. Brigid, Patrick, Columcille), may be noticed by some specific features relating to the story itself and to its style and language.<sup>3</sup>

From the monastic point of view, the *Navigatio* presents not only some genuine Benedictine characteristics, but also concentrates in general on regular coenobitic life, as opposed to the lives of hermits, which were so dear to Irish monks. The characteristics of Benedictine life not only include Brendan's consultation with the brethren before preparing his voyage, or the avoidance of extending meals into the hours of darkness, but also the strictly-observed silence of abbot Ailbe's 'family' in his model monastery and the ceremonious way they receive Brendan and his monks as their guests.<sup>4</sup> An integral part of coenobitic life is the regular office of singing and reciting psalms, which plays an important part in the story as a whole: this

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<sup>3</sup> Seemingly, this has not been noticed by any of the authors collected in J. M. Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature. An Anthology of Criticism*, Dublin 2000, nor in Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*. As early as 1963, J. Carney, in his review of Selmer's edition (*Medium Aevum*, 32, 1963, 37–44, repr. in Wooding, *The Otherworld Voyage*, 42–51) supposed 'that there was in existence in Ireland in the seventh century a primitive Latin account of Brendan's quest for the Land of Promise. This has not survived' (51), but Carney did not take the step to the Continent.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Benedicti Regula*, ed. R. Hanslik, CSEL 75, Vienna, 2nd ed., 1977, 3 (consultation), 6 (silence), 41, 9 (*ut luce fiant omnia*), 53 (guests); Michaela Zelzer, 'Die Geschichte vom Seefahrer Brendan im Dienst der karolingischen Klosterreform', *Regulae Benedicti Studia*, 19 (1997), 175–82.

is not only shown by Brendan and his community, and in abbot Ailbe's monastery, but also on both the Islands of the Birds and the Three Choirs of monks, though the practice of singing 'three psalms' does show some resemblance to an old Irish office rather than to the Benedictine liturgical scheme.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, one of the most important scenes in the *Navigatio* is the encounter of Brendan and his monks with Paul the Hermit, the ancestor of all desert hermits, who lives on a remote Atlantic island near the 'Promised Land'. The hermit not only greets Saint Brendan by means of the psalm *Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum* (ps. 133: 1; ch. 26, 25f. [133]<sup>6</sup>), but he also regards Brendan's Atlantic voyage as a special reward, granted by God's grace to the model coenobitic abbot, while speaking of himself as a poor man sitting like a bird on the ledge of a rock.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the importance of coenobitic life is underlined by the somewhat anachronistic figure of Saint Patrick, who is presented as an abbot, which he never was. Patrick appears as the abbot of the monastery to which, according to the story, Paul the Hermit belonged before leaving it, on the orders of his abbot, for his uncertain journey over the ocean.<sup>8</sup>

Another striking feature of the text, which might prove to be a later combination of both the motifs of the 'journey' and the 'monastic life' by a continental author almost entirely lacking in seafaring experience, is the strictly liturgical pattern of the seven-year voyage

<sup>5</sup> See M. Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor and the Early Monastic Liturgy*, Blackrock (Dublin) 1984, 169–173, 177.

<sup>6</sup> We give both the numbers of Selmer's chapters and lines (cf. n. 2) and, in square brackets, of our own 150 paragraphs of a planned *Navigatio* edition (not yet ready for publication).

<sup>7</sup> "O venerabilis pater, quanta et qualia mirabilia deus ostendit tibi quae nulli sanctorum patrum manifestavit. Et tu dicis in corde tuo non esse te dignum monachicum portare habitum cum sis maior quam monachus? Monachus vero labore manuum suarum utitur et vestitur, deus autem de suis secretis per septem annos pascit te cum tua familia et induit; ego vero miser sedeo sicut avis in ista petra nudus exceptis pilis meis"; see M. Zelzer, 'Die Geschichte', 179; J. M. Wooding, 'The Latin Version, Introduction', in: Barron and Burgess, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, 13–25, here 24.

<sup>8</sup> Concerning coenobitic monastic life, G. O. Simms, *Brendan the Navigator exploring the Ancient World*, Dublin 1990, 83f. considers the way of life of Brendan and his monks as 'a floating monastery', following 'the same pattern set by the prayers of the cloisters and the church within the monastery walls', and Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 23, refers to them as 'following their monastic vocation with permission and guidance' who 'alternately fast, pray and row. Every year, they celebrate the festivals of the calendar in the same places; they exist in a life of monastic *stabilitas* and *stasis*, until they are called to a higher place.'

of Brendan and his monks. Sailing the North Atlantic, not only from the octave of Pentecost right through to Christmas, but also during the fiercest winter storms from the octave of Epiphany to Maundy Thursday, the monks' opportunity to recover was restricted to the Christmas and Easter period, when they were forbidden to continue their journey. Although the weather conditions in those days—as we learn from the leading English historian of climate<sup>9</sup>—were more suitable for sailing in the North Atlantic than they are today, this 'time-table' for Brendan's voyage is determined by the liturgical year rather than by actual climatic conditions. Is it possible to suppose that an Irishman devised this pattern of voyage?<sup>10</sup>

There are, however, different textual levels to be found within the *Navigatio* which reflect the different levels of its supposed origins and aims. The much-disputed adventures of Brendan and his fellow monks on their journey, which are based on biblical allusions and analogies, were undoubtedly related to each other through manifold symbolic references, and they were arranged into the well-known seven-year cycle of the monks' annual return to the places marked by liturgical ceremonies, in order to build up an impressive composition as a whole.<sup>11</sup> But, on the other hand, not the least part of these adventures,

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<sup>9</sup> 'Briefly, there is good reason to believe that there were periods, particularly between A.D. 300 and 500 or perhaps as late as 550, and again between 900 and 1200, as well as a briefer period coinciding approximately with the 8th century A.D. in which there was an anomalously high frequency of anticyclones about the 50 latitudes and sometimes higher latitudes which must have reduced the frequency of storms and made the possibility of safe voyages to Iceland and Greenland higher in those times than in most others', H. H. Lamb in a letter written to Tim Severin, cf. Severin's *The Brendan Voyage*, London 1983 (Arena Books), 201; cf. H. H. Lamb, *Climate, History and the Modern World*, London, 2nd ed. 1995, 172ff. ('The climate had already been in a relatively warm phase in the far north since AD 600', 172; 'One must suppose that there is some substratum of fact in the legendary voyage of Saint Brendan at some time between around AD 520 and 550 and that he got far enough in the direction of Greenland to encounter icebergs', 173).

<sup>10</sup> Unless we take it strictly allegorically, as do, for example, Dorothy A. Bray, 'Allegory in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Viator*, 26 (1995), 1–10, repr. in: Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage*, 175–86 and Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 23, who states 'in terms of narrative structure the text is an allegory of monastic progression'.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, P. C. Jacobsen, 'Die *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', in: Xenja von Ertzdorff and R. Schulz, ed., *Beschreibung der Welt, Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*, Symposium Giessen 1998, Amsterdam 2000 (Chloe, Beihefte zum Daphnis, 31), 63–95. Bray gives an impressive account of the *Navigatio* as 'a monastic metaphor for a life journey toward the ultimate heavenly goal' (176) with some interesting details (e.g. on the significance of the three annual cycles related out of seven, 184f.), but places it entirely into the context of 8th- and 9th-century Irish church and ascetic revival, which 'privileged the anchoritic way of life' (180f., 185f.). For the

in spite of both their mythological-legendary and their biblical-liturgical form, could well reflect experiences actually undergone by Irish seafaring monks on the Atlantic Ocean, perhaps in search of a genuine *Terra Repromissionis* (also involving the cyclical motion of the great Atlantic currents).<sup>12</sup> These adventures, however, must neither be taken literally nor traced back in their entirety to the historical figure of abbot Brendan himself. Before the 9th century, Irish monks not only sailed, as Dicuil reports, to the Faeroes and to Iceland and settled there, but they may have also reached, besides some other Atlantic islands (including more southerly ones producing exceptionally sweet and juicy fruits),<sup>13</sup> some locations on the North-American Atlantic coastline, having been driven off Iceland by the Vikings or at least fled them, in accordance with what we learn from the earliest witnesses to Icelandic history.<sup>14</sup> The *Navigatio* refers to Mernóc, living on the *Insula Deliciosa*, Barrind's 'spiritual son' and his guide on the journey to the 'Land of Promise', who seems to be rather

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manifold influences of both Irish and (Late) Antique texts see Orlandi, *Navigatio sancti Brendani*. 1. *Introduzione*, ch. III and IV (75–129).

<sup>12</sup> 'The story of the *Navigatio* commences and periodically functions within a historical context of voyaging by monastic *peregrini* in the Atlantic between c. 560 and 800 AD. It is likely that some geographical data from actual voyages did find their way into the setting of the tale', J. M. Wooding, *Monastic Voyaging and the Navigatio*, in: Wooding, ed., *The Otherworld Voyage*, 226–45, here 227.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Navigatio* ch. 17, 49–69; 18, 1–19 [98–101]; see Burgess, 'Introduction', in: Barron and Burgess, ed., *The Legend of St Brendan*, 9ff. who also comments on the legendary 'St Brendan's Isle' (or Isles), referred to in medieval maps from the latter 13th century onwards (cf. W. H. Babcock, *Legendary Islands of the Atlantic*, New York 1922, 38–49), and on her 'shift to more western and northerly waters' from 'a remote island which was always warm and lovely' by 16th century 'navigators and cartographers, before the island quite vanished from the maps' (Babcock, 37, 48), as a possible source of 'the hypotheses that Brendan crossed the Atlantic and reached North America'.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Dicuil, *De mensura orbis terrae* (written about 825), ed. L. Bieler, in: J. J. Tierney, *Dicuili liber de mensura orbis terrae*, Dublin 1967 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 6), 6–15, here 7; Wooding, 'Monastic Voyaging', 236–44. 'There is some reason to believe that a few [sc. Irish monks] sailed west, missed Greenland, and fetched up somewhere on the east coast of North America. The evidence is all in the Norse sagas', S. E. Morison, *The European Discovery of America, The Northern Voyages AD 500–1600*, New York and Oxford 1971, 27; K. Zelzer, 'Wege, Wogen und keine Steine, Irische Mönche als Vorgänger der Normannen im nordostamerikanischen Raum?' in: *Steine und Wege, Festschrift D. Knibbe*, Wien 1999, 403–18 (*Österr. Archäolog. Inst., Sonderschriften*, 32), 412ff. All Irish seafaring beyond Iceland, however, is usually seen rather sceptically, for example by Wooding, 'Monastic Voyaging', 227: 'My intention here is [...] to refute the claims [...] that the *Navigatio* is evidence for transatlantic voyages by the early Irish [...]'; see also Burgess, 'Introduction', 7–11.

familiar with this destination, which was difficult to find and to reach because of thick fog. Mernóc issues to his 'father' Barrind the prophecy concerning the opening up of this destination to the Christians by God at the end of time.<sup>15</sup> This prophecy is repeated in a slightly different form by the young man in charge of the 'Promised Land', who links it to the 'time of persecution'.<sup>16</sup>

*Some Philological Remarks on the Latin Text and its Irish Basis*

As I am preparing a critical edition of the Latin text based on a larger number of manuscripts, I would like to present some of my own proposals concerning the constitution of the text, alongside some of David Stifter's observations on the Latin text's Irish basis, which were very helpful to me as a classicist otherwise not familiar with the Irish language.<sup>17</sup>

Like most Old Irish tales and legends, the *Navigatio* (or *Vita*, as it is called), begins with the presentation of the protagonist and his descent. Most of the texts also mention both the family and the region concerned (in some cases only the region). The *Navigatio* fits into this pattern of Irish saints' lives well, since it begins with the phrase *Sanctus Brendanus, filius Finlocha, nepotis Alti, de genere Eogeni Stagni*

<sup>15</sup> *terra* [...] *quam deus daturus est successoribus nostris in novissimo tempore*, ch. 1, 34f. [5].

<sup>16</sup> *post multa vero curricula temporum declarabitur ista terra successoribus vestris quando Christianorum supervenerit persecutio*, ch. 28, 30f. [148], a prophecy referring to the Vikings' raids rather than to eschatological contexts, as stated already by Orlandi, *Navigatio sancti Brendani. 1. Introduzione*, 73 and Zelzer, 'Die Geschichte', 180f.; the reference 'to contemporary events, however, may be to miss the point of the story' (Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 24f. who prefers, with many others, an eschatological interpretation of the prophecy concerned). But, by the way, before the end of time not only *Christiani*, but all people shall meet their persecution!

<sup>17</sup> David Stifter, holding a Master's degree in Latin and Russian and recently the doctorate of Indo-European Linguistics, presently lecturer in Old Irish within the Celtic Studies section established a few years ago at Vienna University, was inspired to work on the *Navigatio* by one of my courses dealing with this text. After a year of Old Irish studies in Ireland his Master's thesis dealt with my Latin text, as it stood around 1996, in relation to its Celtic background: D. Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica. Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, Diplomarbeit der geisteswiss. Fakultät der Univ. Wien 1997 (unpublished). Some years before another student of mine collated three Viennese Latin manuscripts, Vindob. 563 (s. X/XI), 477 (s. XII), and 2217 (s. XV), against a provisional Latin text which Orlandi had prepared for his students (see Wooding, 'Introduction', xxii n. 58): Gabriele Socher, *Textkritische und sprachliche Untersuchungen zur Navigatio Sancti Brendani unter Berücksichtigung dreier Wiener Handschriften*, Diplomarbeit der geisteswiss. Fakultät der Univ. Wien 1990 (unpublished).

*Len* [. . .] *ortus fuit*. Most of the manuscripts give the place-name *regionis Mumenensium* before *ortus fuit*; only a few have *regione* instead of *regionis*. As Stifter has shown, the *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, when giving more details of a place-name by adding the province, always use *in regione/in provincia*, and, since the genitive *Len* should actually read *Lein*, Stifter proposes to read *stagni Le(i)n <in> regione Mumenensium*. The original form *Lein* might also have been a suitable starting point for an haplographic error which led to the loss of *in*; subsequently, the *i* of *Lein* might also have been lost, leaving *stagni len regione/regionis*.<sup>18</sup>

Strikingly, Ireland is not mentioned anywhere, neither at the beginning of the *Navigatio* nor later. The fact that the name of the protagonist's native country is completely ignored should not be taken as a sign of the Irish origin of the Latin text or of its intention to aim at an Irish audience,<sup>19</sup> or as a sign of the omission of a detail of no interest to continental readers, but rather as a consequence of early Carolingian politics; on the Continent at this time, everything Irish had become suspect. The name Ireland seems also to have been omitted intentionally in chapter 12, 39f. [57], where it is alluded to only by the words *sicut mos est in occidentalibus partibus*. The avoidance of this name may also serve as a further argument for the composition of the extant Latin text in early Carolingian times: even the great merits of Fergil/Virgil, of Irish origin and bishop of Salzburg during the second half of the 8th century (he died 784), were intentionally suppressed by 9th-century historiography, and codices written in Irish minuscule during his time were replaced by items written in Carolingian minuscule.<sup>20</sup>

As far as the text itself is concerned, the *Navigatio*, unlike other Irish saints' lives, has hardly any proper names (except in the first sentence), neither local nor personal ones, in their Irish form, nor

<sup>18</sup> Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 11–13.

<sup>19</sup> So Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani. I. Introduzione*, 138ff.; but Irish origin usually is mentioned in Irish texts: cf., e.g., *Sancta itaque Brigida [. . .] de bona ac prudentissima Elech prosapia in Scotia orta, patre Dubtocho et matre Brocca genita (Vita S. Brigidae virginis, PL 72, 777).*

<sup>20</sup> Some of these Carolingian manuscripts are preserved at the Austrian National Library, Vienna; e.g. Latin Gospel commentaries and penitentials of Irish origin, and writings of Adomnan, in Codd. Vindob. 458, 921, 940, 997, 2195, 2233, see B. Bischoff, *Südostdeutsche Schreibschulen*, 2, *Die vorwiegend österreichischen Diözesen*, Wiesbaden 1980, 84f., 90f., 111f., 137, 155, 158f., and H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger, ed., *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter*. Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums Sept. 1984, Salzburg 1985.



do any items of the appellative Irish vocabulary appear within the Latin context. The Latin of the *Navigatio*, 'a clear, mostly culturally neutral Latin idiom' (which, however, does not strongly support Irish authorship),<sup>21</sup> definitely presents some Irish elements, almost certainly due to the first Latin version which came from Ireland, but by no means predominant ones; we do not find the otherwise widespread confusion of single and double consonants (esp. -s/-ss-).<sup>22</sup> There is a fair amount of both popular (but not vulgar) Late Latin and Early Romance characteristics, especially the replacement of the imperfect subjunctive by the pluperfect form, which is not common in Irish Latin texts. Therefore, the author of the extant Latin text, which was composed, in my opinion, within the context of Carolingian monasticism, may not have been Irish. On the other hand, the model he worked on, now lost but probably already in Latin, must have contained some incorrect translations of Irish terms into Latin, which would not have happened to a native Latin speaker, but were clearly not corrected by the Carolingian author. Selmer has already mentioned *frenum*, 'headgear, bridle' (ch. 6, 57 [25f.]), instead of *torques*, 'necklace'. Three more such errors have been cited by Stifter.<sup>23</sup>

*Saltus virtutum* (ch. 1, 5 [2]) is the Latin translation of Irish *Clúain Ferta*. The original meaning of *Clúain Ferta* (*Brénaínd*) was 'pasture of

<sup>21</sup> Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 15ff., in favour of an Irish author, mentions 'genealogical and topographical details, as well as some words and names' (e.g. the great fish *Iasconius*), 'and the occasional instance where we suspect that the Latin syntax represents a calque on Old Irish sentence structure (for example the opening line [...]); there are, however, as Gabriele Socher, *Textkritische und sprachliche Untersuchungen*, 41, 67f. has pointed out, a few phrases showing the widely spaced word-order found in some Hiberno-Latin texts. Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani. I. Introduzione*, 132 supposed that the characteristics of Hiberno-Latin, consisting mostly of orthographical details, were corrected, during the textual tradition, gradually from copy to copy, and mentioned very few linguistic items: one phrase showing the so-called *a*-subjunctive (*intramus et cantamus*), two examples of *alii* instead of *aliqui* or *quidem*, and some instances of omission of the copula *esse* and of the replacement of demonstrative pronouns by reflexive ones; on which linguistic characteristics Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 23–26 commented as corresponding wholly neither to Gallo-Italic nor to Hiberno-Irish early medieval Latin.

<sup>22</sup> 'Im grossen und ganzen sind Syntax und Wortschatz der NSB [...] insgesamt nicht sehr auffällig hibernisch, geschweige denn hisperisch, wenn man darunter sehr ausgefallene Wortwahl und Satzstellung versteht. Nur an einigen Stellen dringen Hibernismen durch ein an sich recht unauffälliges mittelalterliches Latein', Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 146, in favour of an Irish author who most probably wrote the *Navigatio* in the 9th century in the Carolingian empire (107f.).

<sup>23</sup> See Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 16, 18.



the grave' or 'Brendan's meadow of the graves'.<sup>24</sup> The Old Irish genitive plural of *fiurt*, 'miracle' (a loan-word from Latin *virtus*) was a homonym of the genitive singular and plural of *fertae*, 'grave, grave-hill'. In Middle Irish the genitive singular of *fiurt* also coincided with these forms, so the confusion of 'virtue, miracle' and 'grave' becomes understandable. That the form *ferta* should represent a singular form we learn from the name *Clúain Ferta Brénaind*, which probably should read \**Clúain Ferta mBrénaind*, if *ferta* were a plural form.

*Laetitia* (ch. 1, 12 [2]) is the Latin translation of Old Irish *fáilte*, which is, on the one hand, linked to *fáilid*, 'glad, happy', but, on the other hand, is also used for 'welcome', e.g. the Modern Irish salutation *Céad míle fáilte*, 'a hundred thousand welcomes (to you)'. Therefore, Brendan in this passage is inviting Barrind on his arrival to show joy and happiness rather than mournful sadness (though Brendan and his monks should actually grant their 'welcome' to their guest). Also in ch. 11, 31 [43] *signo laetitiae* probably means 'sign of welcome'.

When Brendan sailed into the 'silver net' of the magic crystal column, which probably represents a melting iceberg,<sup>25</sup> he noticed the *umbra solis* inside its secret channels: *semper umbram solis et calorem poterant sentire* (ch. 22, 23f. [111]). As Stifter tells us, Old Irish *scáth* is used for both 'shadow' and 'reflection', so *umbra* with the meaning 'sunbeam, shine, reflection' is to be taken as another mistake in the first Latin version.<sup>26</sup> A striking parallel, with *umbra* used three times, occurs in the *Vita s. Brigidae virginis* from the second half of the 7th century. There, Brigid is said to have returned from her work as a shepherd in wet clothes after a heavy rain. Dazzled by a sunbeam penetrating the house through a tiny hole, she took it for a solid

<sup>24</sup> See Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 148ff., referring to D. and L. Flanagan, *Irish Place Names*, Dublin 1994, 87, and to J. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland, An Introduction and Guide. I: Ecclesiastical*, New York 1929, 2nd ed. 1966, 1968, 409.

<sup>25</sup> 'Brendan's story does not mention the word "ice". His description of the arches opening up for the ship to pass through suggest(s) that the melting of the iceberg's surface had already begun. Those who know about icebergs mention that the disks that form when pieces fall off the iceberg, look in shape like a honey-comb', Simms, *Brendan the Navigator*, 55. The crystalline structure of ice is in fact hexagonal, well-known from snow-flakes and from some patterns of iced windows.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. *ar nach aicid a scáth i n-uisce* 'that its reflexion should not be seen in the water', or *seacht scéith co scáth na gréni* 'seven shields reflecting the sun' (lit. 'with reflexion of the sun'), Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 92.

part of a tree, and when she hung her soaked clothes on it they actually clung to it: *cum suas ope pastorali pasceret oves in campestri loco herboso, largitate nimia pluviarum profusa humidis vestibus domum rediit. et cum umbra solaris per foramina domum intrinsecus intraret, illam umbram obtusa oculorum acie arborem fuisse transversam et fixam putans ac desuper complutam vestem ponens tamquam in arbore grandi et firma, in ipsa tenui solari umbra vestis pependit.*<sup>27</sup>

In addition to these textual errors which can be traced back to some ambiguous words in the original Irish version the Latin text of the *Navigatio*, as found in the oldest manuscripts from the end of the 10th century, which obviously had their own textual histories, is already very corrupt.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, no single manuscript can be taken as model on which to constitute a critical text.<sup>29</sup>

Stifter gives two more examples referring to the original Irish text:<sup>30</sup> Selmer prints *Barinthus nepos illius* (ch. 1, 7 [2]) which should read *Barrindus nepos Neil(l)*. The Old Irish form of the name, as Stifter states, is *Barrand*, etymologically written *Barr(f)ind*, 'with fair top'.<sup>31</sup> The correct spelling *Barrindus* occurs only within the family  $\mu$ , headed by manuscript *M*, which gives *illius* instead of *Neil*; *Neil* in turn replaces Irish *Néill*, the genitive of the proper name *Niall*. Although *Neil*, with a single *l*, occasionally occurs in the *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, the more common spelling has double *ll* (e.g. the *Book of Armagh*),<sup>32</sup> which Stifter would cautiously like to emend in this passage of the *Navigatio*: an indication of the original double consonant might be found in the double *ll* of the variant *illius*.

Further on, Selmer prints *electis bis septem fratribus* (ch. 2, 1f. [13]), which should read *electis binis fratribus septem*, as found in certain manu-

<sup>27</sup> PL 72, 779f.

<sup>28</sup> Munich (Clm) 17740 (*M*), s. X, related to the fragment Munich (Clm) 29061 (now 29890?; *U*), s. X/XI; London BL Add. 36736 (*L*), s. X, and Vienna lat. 563 (*V*) s. X/XI (for unknown reasons not used by Selmer). Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 14, however, calls it 'a relatively homogeneous text, [...] most variants are relatively minor'.

<sup>29</sup> As Selmer unfortunately tried to do (following ms. Gent, UL 401, s. XI, as 'codex optimus'); on his edition cf. Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 14; and J. Carney's 'Review' (cf. n. 3).

<sup>30</sup> Stifter, *Philologica Latino-Hibernica*, 16, 43.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Uhlich, 'Einige Britannische Lehnennamen im Irischen: Brénainn (Brenden), Cathaír/Catháer und Midir', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 49/50 (1997), 878–97, esp. 878ff.

<sup>32</sup> Dublin, Trinity 52 (written around 807), f. 2r (Muirchú): *rex [...] Loiguire nomine, filius Neill*; f. 10r (Tírechán): *filium Neill [...] .*

scripts, *binis* being replaced by *bonis* in the family  $\mu$ . Although other manuscripts place *fratribus* at the beginning or the end of the phrase, the placing of the item being counted between two numbers is good Old Irish practice and therefore to be incorporated into the Latin text.

Besides these examples, which can be traced back to the original Irish text, the Latin version of the *Navigatio* displays several features of popular syntax, also found in Late Latin texts, but exceeding them in number and quality. The use of the *ablativus absolutus* is widespread, but also of the absolute participle in general, and the loss of the syntactic function of the *participium coniunctum*. Most striking in the *Navigatio* is the absolute ablative replacing the subject of the sentence immediately following—which, however, has hardly ever been corrected in the manuscripts. The same tendency is noticeable in the *nominativi pendentes* which express important elements and are placed at the head of some sentences, to be integrated into the entire syntactic structures only by pronouns given in the cases required. Syntactic structures such as these have, from the earliest times, caused modifications and emendations in the manuscripts: e.g. instead of the phrase *pernoctantibus nobis et perambulantibus totam insulam meus filiulus duxit me* (ch. 1, 31 [5]) we find several variations: *me meoque filiolo pernoctantibus* [. . .] or *nobis et filio meo* [. . .] or *me* [. . .] *perambulantem* [. . .]; or, in Selmer's text, *mihi autem pernoctanti insulamque totam perambulanti meus filiulus duxit me* (where the dative seems hardly comprehensible). Further on, Selmer did not understand the nominatives preceding their phrases in *furcae ferreae ubi pendet, illas dedi sacerdotibus templi*, [. . .] *petra in qua sedeo, illam misi in fossam* (ch. 25, 43ff. [127]); following some manuscripts (among them *L*), he printed *furcas ferreas in quibus pannus pendet dedi* [. . .] *petram in qua sedeo misi in fossam*, which is clearly to be interpreted as a secondary syntactic emendation.

Another characteristic feature of both popular and Late Latin is the widespread tendency towards greater precision through the insertion of abundant expressions, e.g. *praedictus*, 'aforesaid, aforementioned', often used in medieval Latin, or particles such as *inde*, which later developed into Italian *ne* and French *en* respectively (representing a sort of partitive genitive), or by using certain periphrastic verbs, e.g. *coepisse* to mark the ingressive quality of the verbal action (the latter was deliberately avoided, e.g. by the scribe of codex *L*, dating from the 10th century, who in most cases used the simple verb instead of the periphrastic phrase).

On the other hand, we find examples of ‘concise style’, often without any copula or conjunction, which again resulted in variants and emendations:

In chapter 1, 26f. [4] Selmer prints *una refectio et ad opus dei semper fuit coadunata*. Tombeur proposed *una refectio ad opus dei perficiendum una ecclesia* (following codex *R*, Vat. Reg. lat. 481, s. xi, as did Orlandi), and Bieler, combining various textual traditions, suggested *una refectio et ad opus dei una in ecclesia perficiendum semper fuit coadunata* (sc. *familia*). *Perficiendum*, however, is found in only a few manuscripts, but there are variants such as *perficientes*, *perficientibus* or *perfecta est*. My proposal is simply *una refectio, ad opus dei una ecclesia*.

In chapter 11, 36 [44] Selmer, following codex *G* (Gent 401, s. xi), prints *non peccando in eorum consensu fuimus*, Bieler and Orlandi (both without any manuscript authority) *non peccando eorum consensimus* and *non peccando ei consensi sumus* respectively; there are nearly as many variants as there are manuscripts. Here my proposal follows codex *F* (Paris, BNF, lat. 3784, s. xi), which simply has *non peccando aut consentiendo*.<sup>33</sup>

In chapter 12, 92f. [63] Selmer prints *non in monasterio ullam vocem aut ullum strepitum aliquis presumebat*, Orlandi (following a single manuscript) [. . .] *ulla vox aut ullus strepitus aliquid praesumens*. Only a few manuscripts have *ullam vocem*, nearly all reading *ulla vox*, but several variants of the other items: various forms of the verb *praesumere*, cited a few lines before, or *audiebatur*; my proposal is again simply *ulla vox aut strepitus*.

Another linguistic feature characteristic of Late Latin is the widespread replacement of the imperfect subjunctive by the pluperfect subjunctive, adopted from Medieval Latin by several Romance languages, but not all that common in Irish Latin. This could have stimulated some interlinear modifications or emendations resulting in erroneous forms in the extant manuscripts, such as *expremuit* instead of *expressit*,<sup>34</sup> or *illucesisset*<sup>35</sup> or *dirigisset*,<sup>36</sup> so we should be very cautious about incorporating them into a critical text. Some other glosses

<sup>33</sup> See at this sentence also the article of Jacobsen in this volume.

<sup>34</sup> Only found in cod. *M*, perhaps originated from *expremuit* (-que Selmer), or *e* for short *i* of this form, ch. 17, 65 [99].

<sup>35</sup> Selmer, combined from *illucesceret* and *illuxisset*, ch. 17, 41 [97].

<sup>36</sup> Selmer, combined from *direxisset* and *dirigeret/dirigebat*, ch. 19, 2 [103].

might also have slipped into the text, e.g. the addition *atque gubernat* given by Selmer and a number of manuscripts after the threefold expression *deus enim adiutor noster et nautor et gubernator* (ch. 6, 7 [19]).

In conclusion, I would like to offer three conjectures. Firstly, and very straightforwardly, the emendation of a haplographic error: chapter 15, 49 [80] should certainly read, according to the Bible, *cornu(a) altaris* instead of *cornu altaris*. Greater difficulties are presented by the second passage. In chapter 11, 16f. [42] Selmer prints *Erat autem super illum fontem arbor mirae latitudinis in girum, non minus altitudinis*. Instead of *non minus* Orlandi proposes *non nimis*. Several manuscripts show *nimiae*, some others *minoris* or *minime*. Adomnán in his *De locis sanctis*<sup>37</sup> used *nimis* instead of *valde* and *nimius* instead of *magnus*, which is basically also found in the *Navigatio*; its text gives *nimius* at six more passages, *nimis* once.<sup>38</sup> But *nimius/nimis*, as Stifter tells us, only occurs in positive sentences, never in a negative context, neither in the *Navigatio* nor in other Hiberno-Latin texts; therefore my proposal is to delete *non* as a dittography and to write *nimiae altitudinis*.

A third passage might be emended by restoring a lost syllable. In chapter 18, 17ff. [101] Selmer prints *Interim flabat illis ventus odorem suavissimum ita ut oblivium illorum ieiunium conaretur*. Orlandi, not following any manuscript, offered *ut oblivium illorum ieiunii inchoaretur*. Since all manuscripts differ considerably in this passage, but the majority has *ad oblivionem illorum*, I should like to emend *conaretur* to *con(cit)aretur* and, consequently, to read *ut ad oblivionem illorum ieiunium con(cit)aretur*.

Suggestions and proposals like these concerning philological work on the Latin *Navigatio sancti Brendani* indicate that much work remains to be done. With regard to the story as a whole, however, by utilising a plot written in plain and popular Latin and moulded into the form of a saint's life (the normal monastic reading and entertainment at the time), it proved possible, even though the *Navigatio* was not a standard saint's life, not only to propagate but also to recommend to the monastic world the importance of a regular coenobitic life. The *Navigatio*'s quick and widespread diffusion, the development of

<sup>37</sup> See D. Meehan and L. Bieler, ed., *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis*, Dublin 1958, repr. 1983 (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 3), 135.

<sup>38</sup> *nimius*, ch. 6, 55 [24]; 12, 8. 18 [53. 55]; 14, 2 [74]; 21, 6 [106]; 26, 35 [134]; *nimis* ch. 26, 13 [132].

far more than superficial textual divergences within its early Latin traditions and the many early translations into vernacular languages show that this concept has been launched purposefully and, eventually, successfully. So the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis* became 'one of the most widely read and imitated texts in the Middle Ages'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Wooding, 'The Latin Version', 13; cf. L. Bieler, *Ireland, Harbinger of the Middle Ages*, London and Oxford, 2nd ed. 1966, 10, 143. The English version of this article has been prepared by Klaus Zelzer, who is most grateful to both David Stifter (Vienna) and Christine Salazar (Cambridge) for their useful comments.

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